

JEMF QUARTERLY



VOL. XXI

SPRING/SUMMER 1985
(Double Issue)

NO. 75/76

(Published Spring 1989)



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Volume XXI Spring/Summer 1985 Number 75/76 (Double Issue)
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JEMF QUARTERLY

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Editorial

It is with pleasure, relief, and more than a little embarrassment that we present, in May, 1989, the first issue of volume 21 of the *JEMF Quarterly*. Carrying a 1985 cover date, this issue is the second to be published since the Center for Popular Music assumed publication of *JEMFQ*. When the transfer occurred, the Center pledged to accomplish two things: publish the journal on schedule and provide the support necessary to upgrade its appearance. Pursuit of the latter aim has been largely (though not entirely) responsible for failing to achieve the former.

Our initial plan was to produce camera-ready copy on the Center's then-newly-acquired computer system. Unfortunately, the hardware proved unequal to the task and the decision was made to have the entire issue typeset and professionally laid out by the MTSU Publications and Graphics Department. This caused further delay, but we hope that readers feel the results justify the extra time spent.

Apart from graphic concerns, the challenge of finding the time to devote to the *Quarterly* while getting a new music research center established has been a considerable one. We are, however, confident that most major problems have been solved and that readers can look forward to more timely publication of the *JEMF Quarterly* and its successor, *American Vernacular Music*.

We apologize for the delay and thank all of you for your patience.

The next issue, which is well along in the editorial process, will be the last *JEMF Quarterly*. It will contain a retrospective section on *JEMF* with articles by Norm Cohen, Archie Green, Ed Kahn, and others. We expect to publish this issue in the fall of 1989. Following this will be the inaugural issue of *American Vernacular Music*. *AVM* will be published semi-annually, with one issue each year devoted to a particular topic or genre of music. An issue focusing on bluegrass music is already in development.

The announced change in title and our statement that we intend to "expand coverage away from an emphasis on phonograph records and early country music to embrace other forms of vernacular music and all forms of dissemination of such music" seem to have raised some concern among loyal *JEMFQ* readers, perhaps unnecessarily.

The need for the title change is obvious, since we are not the *JEMF*. Beyond this, however, we feel strongly that the title of a journal should reflect its content. Although *JEMFQ* is widely-known and respected, the name still inevitably elicits a "J-E-M-what?" response from the uninitiated. The cries of protest from faithful readers who are chagrined by the change have been more than offset by the expressions of enthusiasm from those who share our concern for a descriptive title. We hope and trust that readers will soon adjust to the movement of the journal's subtitle to the top of the title page.

The statement of editorial policy is more renewal than revision. Despite its role as an outlet for the publication of discographical research on early (usually) country music and the popular perception of it as a hillbilly record collectors' journal, the *Quarterly* has never been exclusively devoted to such matters. Its broader goal (as stated twenty years ago in the very first *Quarterly*) has been to publish research on "those forms of American folk music disseminated by commercial media such as print, sound recordings, films, radio, and television." Although country music may have dominated, articles on blues, gospel, rock, and various forms of ethnic music have long since graced these pages. By taking a strong stance toward encouraging research in the broad spectrum of American vernacular music we are seeking only to bring the journal's image more in line with what has, in fact, been editorial policy for quite some time.

This certainly does not mean, as some readers seem to fear, that we will no longer publish country discographies or other research on country music. On the contrary, we will be happy to publish as much good material of this sort as researchers produce. Our sense is that presently there is little activity in this type of discographical research, although we would love to be proven wrong. And although we still await the comprehensive country discography promised by the Country Music Foundation, the amount of discographical research that has been published in *JEMFQ* in the past (as well as in *Old Time Music*, *The Journal of Country Music*, *The Devil's Box*, and elsewhere) leaves us with a field that has been extensively, if not completely, mined.

On the other hand, with so much of the emphasis in the past on bio-discographical research, other potential avenues of investigation have been somewhat overlooked. We therefore challenge researchers to turn their attention to such matters as repertoire studies, studies of individual songs or tunes, stylistic analysis of performances, studies of cross-cultural and cross-genre interchange. The other forms of commercial dissemination apart from sound recordings—radio, television, film, sheet music, and song book publishing—have also not been investigated as much as they need to be.

Although scholarship in all forms of American music, vernacular or otherwise, has blossomed since the *Quarterly* first began publication, there is much yet to be done. We look forward to taking an active role in moving the field forward.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I laud the efforts of Willie Smyth to index country music artists and songs in commercial motion pictures. It is a shame so little has been done in this area. The Country Music Foundation in Nashville has perhaps the best single collection of these kinds of films, yet due to lack of funding they are not cataloged. Its library staff does not even know the collection's full contents. I hope efforts such as Smyth's help place cataloging of this collection in a higher priority. As awareness of the scope and content of country music on film is brought to light, the needs of the emerging video software and cable television industries for more diverse material could send them to these vault films with their appeal to both the collector and the country music fan.

I would like to point out an error perpetuated by Smyth in Part II of his preliminary index (*JEMFQ* #71, p. 196).

Bob Wills, to the best of my knowledge, did not appear in the film *Melody Ranch*. In the acknowledgements before Part I (*JEMFQ* #70, p. 107), Smyth makes no mention of the single most valuable source of information on western movies and the probable source of this error. That reference is Les Adams and Buck Rainey's *Shoot-Em-Ups*, subtitled as "The Complete Reference Guide to Westerns of the Sound Era." I have searched for a number of years to verify if Wills and band were, in fact, in this film. All attempts short of viewing a complete print of the film have supported a negative position. However, the enclosed photo still from the film does show Spade Cooley as a musician in a back-up band.

"Stompin' Steve" Hathaway
KKUP-FM, Cupertino, CA



Jimmy Durante and Ann Miller in Gene Autry film, *Melody Ranch* (1942). Note Spade Cooley, with fiddle, sitting behind Durante.

To the Editor:

In his very useful omnibus review of western swing reissues (*JEMFQ* #71, pp. 162-173), Bob Pinson writes that "Bluin' the Blues," included in the Bob Wills' collection on Texas Rose TXR 2709, "[is] an instrumental dating back to 1918, when it was recorded by the original Dixieland Jazz Band." Mr. Pinson may have made this remark because the album's annotator, Cary Ginell, says the same thing in his album notes. Mr. Ginell may have said it because the original Vocalion/OKeh issue of Bob Wills' "Bluin' the Blues" credits Henry W. Ragas as the composer. To be sure, Ragas was a member of the ODJB (its original pianist), and that band *did* record a "Bluin' The Blues" in 1918. Whatever the reasons for the statements, it can be stated categorically that, outside of the fact that each performance consists of a sequence of twelve-bar blues choruses, there is no similarity between the Wills and ODJB numbers.

That in the course of reviewing some thirty-one albums Mr. Pinson happened to get the provenance of a tune wrong would appear to be a matter of no consequence whatever. Unfortunately his error is just one more manifestation of a condition which seems to have become pandemic among western swing critics and annotators: the misidentification of the originals of tunes in the western swing repertory.

Cary Ginell, who has annotated quite a few western swing reissues, seems to be particularly prone to errors in identifying tunes. In his notes to the Ocie Stockard reissue on Origin OJL-8103 he writes that the "Just Blues" the Stockard band plays is a Fletcher Henderson tune. The Henderson band, as Connie's Inn Orchestra, did indeed record a "Just Blues" credited to Henderson in 1931, but here again, outside of the fact that both numbers consist of twelve-bar blues choruses, there is no connection between the Stockard and the Henderson "Just Blues." (It happens that the Henderson band recorded another "Just Blues" [Morris] for Ajax in 1924, but since a copy of that record did not turn up in the collecting community until 1973, the probability that one of the Ocie Stockard's Wanderers heard the Ajax "Just Blues" and introduced it to the band for their 1937 session is nil.)

In his notes to the same Origin LP, Mr. Ginell identifies another number, "Why Shouldn't I?," as a Cole Porter song. He even goes to the trouble of naming the show (*Jubilee*, 1935) in which the song was introduced and mentions other hits from the show ("Begin the Beguine," "Just One of Those Things"). This information might help in appreciating the Stockard performance of the "Why Shouldn't I?" on the LP if it were Cole Porter's, but it is in fact an entirely different song from his. (Parenthetically, one may wonder what there was either in the lyrics or the music of the Stockard "Why Shouldn't I?" to make Mr. Ginell think they were Porter's?)

As yet another example of misidentification, Richard Stephan Aldrich makes two egregious mistakes in his notes to "Western Swing Vol. 2," Old Timey LP 116, where he notes that the Tune Wranglers' "Up Jumped the Devil," the initial track on the LP, was first recorded by Tony Parenti's Liberty Syncopators in 1926. In the first place, the Parenti "Up Jumped the Devil" and the Tune Wranglers' "Up Jumped the Devil" are two different compositions, having nothing in common but the name. And in the second place the number Parenti's band plays had been recorded previously (in 1924) by Merritt Brunies and His Friars Inn Orchestra.

What is going on here? It appears that when they prepare their annotations, the western swing critics consult discographies and other references for tune titles. If they find a *title* which is the same as the one they are annotating, they assume the two *numbers* are the same. It also appears, if Bob Pinson, Cary Ginell, and Richard Stephan Aldrich are representative, that the western swing critics hardly know either the jazz repertory or American popular song at all. Well, nobody can be expected to know everything. What the annotators should do, of course, is to seek out recorded versions or the sheet music of the pieces they think they have identified as the originals of the ones under discussion. Failing that—and under the conditions annotators work that course is often simply not practical—when they do not know what they are talking about, they ought to keep quiet. The misinformation which is rife in the notes to current western swing reissues neither helps those who have already found the music to understand it better, nor will it persuade those who come to western swing from an interest in jazz, blues, or popular song that will be worth their attention.

Jerome S. Shipman
Potomac, MD

Bob Pinson replies:

Shipman's complaint is a valid one. I'd noticed the label credit to Ragas years ago and made the association with the ODJB at that time and even asked one Texas Playboy, Sleepy Johnson, about his recollections as to where they picked up the song. But he could only remember getting it from a jazz record. (This was all before I had a chance to hear the ODJB recording.) I told him that it was pretty close to Milton Brown's earlier recording of "Joe Turner Blues" in places, but I don't recall now whether he was in agreement with that or not. A few years ago I did hear ODJB's "Bluin' the Blues" and again couldn't see much resemblance with the Wills record, but was never sure enough of myself to refute it. As yet, I've still not heard

any of the early recordings of "Joe Turner Blues" by jazz artists and honestly don't know whether it's the same melody as the "Joe Turner Blues" fiddle tune or not. Had I heard such and determined to my own satisfaction that both were identical, I'd probably have been more prone in my own review to say something about it. But if they're not the same, then we're still left wondering what jazz record Johnson was referring to. And why was it logged as "Bluin' the Blues"? Since Shipman made no comment about the true origin of the tune, I now tend to think that the two "Joe Turner Blues" are not the same. Shipman would have pointed it out otherwise. It's too bad that more jazz collectors haven't taken a little interest in western swing over the past decades, but they've usually had little use for it. Had we had more Shipmans over the years, there's no doubt that better documentation regarding origins of many western swing titles would have been achieved.

Bob Pinson
Country Music Foundation

Cary Ginell replies:

There are at least six recordings by southwestern stringbands that include a similar melody to that of Bob Wills' "Bluin' the Blues." They include:

- Joe Turner Blues-Milton Brown & His Musical Brownies
(Bluebird-1934)
- Drag Along Blues-Roy Newman & His Boys
(Vocalion-1934)
- Bluin' the Blues-Bob Wills & His Texas Playboys
(Vocalion-1936)
- Joe Turner Blues-The Hi Flyers (Vocalion-1937)
- Old Joe Turner Blues-Cliff Bruner's Texas Wanderers
(Decca-1938)
- Joe Turner Blues-Adolf Hofner & His Texans
(Bluebird-1940)

The Brown version, the earliest of the six, was copyrighted by Southern Music Publishing Company, Inc. on 13 April 1934. The copyright lists Milton Brown and fiddler Cecil Brower as co-authors. The Hi Flyers' 1937 recording features a sudden acceleration in tempo near the end of the record. Hi Flyers' fiddler Darrell Kirkpatrick told me he learned the tune from the Brownies' radio programs and patterned the tempo change after the Brownies' 1935 Decca recording of "St. Louis Blues." Roy Newman's band occasionally played "double-band dances" with the Brownies and it is possible that Newman's fiddler Art Davis also learned the song from Milton's band, renaming it "Drag Along Blues." The Bruner version is the only one of the six to feature lyrics, sung by Moon Mullican. How

Bob Wills mistook "Bluin' the Blues" for this melody is not known. A representative jazz recording of "Joe Turner Blues" by Johnny Dodds' Black Bottom Stompers (Brunswick 3696: 1927) has little resemblance to the stringband versions, other than the twelve-bar blues structure, leading me to believe that the Brownies' version was an independent composition.

It is hoped that other jazz collectors will assist country music scholars in tracking down original source recordings to help "set the records straight."

Cary Ginell
Reseda, CA

Dueling Banjos: Overt and Covert Competition in Amateur Bluegrass Performance

Thomas A. Adler

Competition is a well-known but ill-examined aspect of many vernacular instrumental musics, particularly those which traditionally value improvisation. One reason for the dearth of detailed information on musical competition may be that non-musicians (or, more accurately, non-players of a given vernacular music, a substyle, or even a particular instrument) simply may not have the proper perspective for observing and reporting on the particular "contests," formal and informal, which comprise competition in improvised performances. Moreover, non-participant observers of group musics, even if aware of competition, may be more immediately struck by and interested in the cooperative aspects of a band than the competitive ones.

In bluegrass music, the element of competition has already received a certain cursory attention, particularly insofar as it is revealed through formal contests between different bands, as at many festivals and shows, or between the different melodic instrumentalists who collectively make up a band, e.g., the fiddler versus the mandolinist, or (as in "Dueling Banjos," the theme music from *Deliverance*) the banjoist versus the guitarist.¹

Another kind of competition in bluegrass music is revealed in the statements, attitudes, and behaviors of those who play one kind of instrument, and who, in the usual course of performance, do not play with one another at the same time. While this paper concentrates on this third category of competition, for a specially intense and regular sense of competitiveness exists among bluegrass banjoists, it seems proper to begin with some consideration of the entire competitive milieu within which banjo-players, and other bluegrass musicians, operate.

In many cultures, open displays of interpersonal competition are not considered appropriate behavior for normally socialized adults.² Certain limited forms of competition may still be allowed (or even expected) of musicians, especially when they are stereotyped as social deviants.³ But a pattern of thoroughgoing competition pervades Euro-American society in general, and southern white Protestant male culture in particular.⁴ If the regional agrarian culture in which bluegrass music arose is thought of in terms of Robert Redfield's ideal model of the *folk society*, an apparent contradiction becomes evident. Folk societies are characterized by a number of features which constrain and limit competition; social relations are grounded in the family unit, there is a strong sense of group solidarity, and the treatment of the well-known "others" (i.e., non-kin, non-strangers) in the society is always carried out in per-

sonal and moral (rather than "objective") terms.⁵ These characteristics, like many of the others postulated in Redfield's idealized "constellation of aspects," seem so applicable to preindustrial life in the region that nurtured hill-billy music that it is tempting to think of early bluegrass and its precursors as the products of a folk society (or at least a "quasi-folk" or "folk-like" society).⁶ Yet even if we accept such an application of Redfield's own words of qualification: "Within the limits set by custom there is invitation to excel in performance. There is lively competition...."⁷ At every level, competition in Anglo-American stringband music is clearly related to this larger cultural pattern of competition, which helps to define the identity of individuals hierarchically. Bill Monroe's own attitude toward competition seems entirely typical and consistent, for it underlies not only his music, but also many of his other favorite recreational activities, like raising prize-winning horses and mules, training fighting roosters (or game chickens, as most Kentuckians call them), and playing baseball. In the late 1940s Monroe even supported two baseball teams, one of which, partly manned by such Blue Grass Boys as Dave "Stringbean" Akeman and Don Reno, travelled with the Monroe tent show. Monroe biographer Jim Rooney wrote: "the mixture of bluegrass and baseball was no stunt in Bill's eyes. To him, music was a form of competition just like sports."⁸ To quote Monroe himself:

All the way through, bluegrass is competition with each man trying to play the best he can, be on his toes. You'll find it in every group. You'll find it in one group and another group following him. It works that way. They'll still be friends, but they'll work harder to be better than the other one.⁹

Yet competition between different bands is viewed ambivalently by many professional bluegrass musicians. On the one hand, most pickers agree with Monroe that a competitive attitude raises the level of everyone's musicianship; but on the other hand, competition reflects the special problems of those who try to make a living playing music that is also being made in quantity by amateurs. Many musicians see the competitive aspect of their profession as a negative consequence of the early days, when "musicians [i.e., bands] had to be competitive because maybe there weren't so many engagements."¹⁰ A few professionals, like J.D. Crowe, are quick to point out that while competition among amateur bands still underlies the emergence of professional bands, competition *with* amateur bands for the limited dollars and attention of the

public has made life much harder for the would-be full-time professional. Crowe has even suggested that inter-band competition arising from bluegrass audiences' need to compare different groups functions to stifle the creative potential of professional groups:

Well, people want to hear the same thing. You can learn 40 songs and that's all you'll have to learn for the rest of your life. As far as bluegrass goes. That's all they want to hear. It's like a competition thing. They want to see how good this group does it, and that group.¹¹

While Crowe is undoubtedly correct about the inevitability of inter-band competition as a force in bluegrass, other musicians see a link between the informal comparison of different bands and the formal contests which pit band against band or musician against musician. The need (on the part of both audience and participants) to establish a formal artistic hierarchy underlies the long history of fiddle contests, banjo contests, and bluegrass band contests.¹² The fiddle, as both a solo instrument and the premier lead instrument in stringband music, has so long a history of use in formal competitions that a special approach called "contest-style" fiddling has emerged in the past two or three decades, much to the annoyance of those old-time fiddlers and folklorists who see it only as a leveling and homogenizing of the old regional and local stylistic preferences. Fiddle contests and "old-time fiddlers' conventions" are entirely congruent with the overall cultural predilection for competition already mentioned. Although formalized fiddle contests may have established the basic pattern for the other formal competitions, there are of necessity some differences. The main criteria for judging competitions in fiddling include not only technical execution, but also such features as the difficulty of the tune attempted, the ability to play interesting variations on a familiar melody, and the tasteful incorporation into a familiar fiddle tune of borrowed or newly-invented musical ideas. These criteria cannot be extended to *band* contests in a clear-cut and straightforward way, but they certainly apply to other instruments capable of playing lead or solo parts.

Considering that the banjo only became widely accepted as a lead instrument after Earl Scruggs demonstrated his three-finger picking style in the seminal Monroe band of 1945, the development of competition among banjoists playing bluegrass had been particularly rapid. Formal banjo contests became a part of the bluegrass festival scene almost from the days of the first festivals of the 1960s. The sense that there was something over which to compete formally in banjo-playing arose precisely because of the technical and aesthetic breakthrough achieved almost simultaneously by Scruggs and other three-finger banjoists from the east-central Blue Ridge region of Appalachia. The articulatory revolution in

banjo-picking sparked by Scruggs enabled the instrument to achieve lead-instrument status, but this aesthetic paradigm-shift carried with it the unvoiced but pervasive realization that the new norm—Scruggs-picking in this case—was an *incompletely-developed mode of articulation*.¹³ Scruggs came up with much that was new but, for all his admitted genius, he came nowhere near exhausting the articulatory possibilities of his own technical innovation. Early emulators of Scruggs found themselves not just imitating, but often innovating, sometimes without meaning to do so. At the very least, the new three-finger technique and new role of the instrument in stringbands opened up the upper range of the banjo's fingerboard and enabled new mediations of the conceptually-opposed musical functions of melodic and harmonic definition. This expansion of articulatory possibilities through the opening of a new technical domain underlies the growth of a competitive framework for bluegrass banjo players, but it does not explain why bluegrass banjoists became so quickly stereotyped as competitive. Today, most bluegrass musicians freely acknowledge the special tendency of banjoists to engage in both overt and covert duels or contests with one another. In the overt and formal world of the organized banjo contest, the competition is placed in the foreground for the benefit of non-banjoist audiences, and, importantly, its social and emotional consequences for the contestants are constrained or mitigated by the sequential separation of performances and the avowedly neutral system of judges, rules, and contest criteria.

Informal and covert competitions, however, are perhaps even more important to musicians than the formal, overt contests; certainly as a category of competitive behavior they have been going on longer than formal banjo contests. As Sonny Osborne describes in the following story, even Earl Scruggs' childhood banjo-playing was carried out in a competitive atmosphere.

Scruggs says when he was about 14, he and [his older brother] Junie were, in effect, learning together. He noticed he had been playing in a smoother way than normal. It dawned on him he had been using three fingers instead of the usual two. He told me he was sitting on the porch playing *Reuben* when Junie came home. He saw Junie's reaction and knew he had what he wanted. He had won the "contest" between Junie and himself.¹⁴

The typical modern arena for covert competitions is not a public stage, but usually the semi-public setting of the festival parking lot. A close scrutiny of the interchanges that occur when banjoists get together will often reveal a sort of ritualized competition, in which one banjoist may attempt to establish that he is musically better than another; that is smoother, faster, cleaner, more accomplished, more versatile, more knowledgeable. A competitive encounter is not always easy to spot, however, because such interchanges are partially covert. An implicit rule of

bluegrass etiquette may keep a banjoist from admitting that he is in competition with another, but it can be apparent to both banjoists that a duel of sorts is taking place. Such dueling, therefore, may be a very subtle phenomenon, most easily sensed by another competent banjoist. Moreover, the system within which competitions occur is itself always in flux, as evidenced by the following text from the magazine *Bluegrass Unlimited*:

Diary of a Festival Parking Lot Picker

Roanoke: 1965 - I have just stumbled upon this festival as I was travelling home from a trip to Nashville. I am in the parking lot and have just spotted the first live bluegrass banjo player I have ever seen. "How in the heck is that done, what is he doing anyhow?" I see everything is three-fingered and in the key of G, and all kinds of strange songs I have never heard of before. I would certainly never take my banjo out of the case with guys like this playing...

Roanoke: 1966 - O.K. I have a little "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" out of the Seeger book, now to show them how it's done. "What the heck is that stuff?"...how does he play that wild little lick in the middle of that one there? "My Gosh." "I wouldn't get caught dead with my little Harmony banjo and what little I play with these guys doing all that fancy stuff and all those wild-sounding numbers I never heard of before." Maybe I better get a few albums and work on it a little.

Berryville: 1967 - Ah Ha, I have my new Mastertone 250 and I can play all over Cripple Creek and Cumberland Gap...I'm really going to tear up that lot this year. "OH NO," What in heavens name are they playing this time? Hard Times? How does he get that strange sound?...I just can't take my banjo out with this kind of competition. Maybe next year.

Berryville: 1968 - Boy oh boy, can I throw in the licks on that Salt Creek...What the...Dixie Breakdown?, Stoney Creek? "What, you say they're not playing Salt Creek this year?" This is too much, why three years ago I would have been right in there, but now....

Berryville: 1969 - All right, let them throw their worst at me, I'm all set. I can improvise with the best of them. Must know at least thirty numbers off the records. No way they can keep me down. Even ol' Earl will have to take notes. "Good Grief, what are they doing to me?" "Who's Bill Keith?"...Well, can't take out my banjo with all this talent around. They laugh at my Fire on the Mountain if I don't do some of that strange sounding picking on it. Just what will they think up for next year?

Berryville: 1970 - All right, here it is, this is my year...Give me room boys and take a lesson. Wow, look at those fancy looking banjos with the wild looking inlay. Seems everybody has a pre-War Mastertone but me. My Mastertone 250 looks terrible next to theirs, and what is that they're playing: "What's that with the fancy finger work? You call it Reno? And what's that strange number you're doing in that Keith stuff? Cumberland Gap and Cripple Creek?!"

O.K., that's it, I'm right back where I started. I quit. Next year I'm going to bring a bass.¹⁵

The preceding quotation shows very graphically some of the frustrations that grip a beginner as he comes to realize the musical tradition he has chosen to enter is itself in a rapid state of flux.¹⁶ The progression of fashions and current "sounds" in bluegrass banjo is a concrete manifestation of the folkloric nature of amateur bluegrass. Even though musical ideas are partly disseminated through the mass medium of records, and by a "deciding group" of professionals, most of the professionals are second-generation pickers who were once amateurs themselves, and each went through a similar series of competitive encounters.¹⁷ Thus the tradition embraces both "folk" and "popular" levels of cultural transmission, yet retains an essentially folk character, since it involves the face-to-face oral/aural context of the music making and is variable and esoteric. It is precisely because of these traditional dynamics of bluegrass that such socio-musical features as competition and dueling are perpetuated.

The competitive dimension of the bluegrass banjo tradition is manifested in many ways beyond those listed above. Banjoists sometimes acknowledge themselves to be in a state of friendly rivalry with other banjoists in their community. Ed Narragansett, a banjoist from New York City, elaborated on this point:

You'll always want to find out how good the other guy is, but you don't want have to do it in a bad way. Like, there was a guy living in Brooklyn. And he was doin' pretty good at what he was doin', and I was doin' pretty good at what I was doin', see. I was faster then than I am now, because I used to play a lot then. And we used to play together, and—it was nice, you know, because sometimes he'd be better, and sometimes I'd be better. But it was always this thing we had goin', with, "Hey, that was really good, let's play another one."

But Narragansett had seen a negative side of banjoistic rivalries, too. Speaking of another musician he had encountered in Indiana, he said:

I could try to understand it if some guy who's really good put you down, and acts surly. But here was this fifteen-year-old kid who sounded crashy, didn't play the right notes, played it the same thing, the same way every time, and played lousy music. I think he was a competitive guy. And it annoyed me.¹⁸

The ultimate arena for covert musical competition is in a pick-up band setting, at festival parking lots or behind the scenes at bluegrass concerts. In such settings one often finds thrown-together groups that are overmanned instrumentally, with perhaps three guitarists, two fiddlers, a mandolin player, a bassist, and—for purposes of illustration—two banjo players. Since the setting is informal, the group is mainly playing for its members' own

pleasure, even though pickers tend to be highly conscious of any audience that gathers around them. Still, the group physically represents itself as oblivious to the audience with all participants facing inward in a rough circle. The principal banjoists may be facing each other at a small distance, or they may be separated by one or more musicians. Either way, they remain highly aware of the other's presence. Superficially, this awareness is required, if only to allow for a reasonable and courteous exchange of breaks among all the participating musicians. One banjoist may begin by suggesting that the *other* name a song or tune and "take off on it." The fencing has already begun at this point. The responding banjoist may assume a defensive posture by begging off somehow, saying he can't think of anything to play, and besides, he is just here to watch the first one and learn some of his hot licks. An humble response is almost always safe, for it leaves the respondent rhetorically "covered" in the event that the unknown first banjoist really is a superior player. If he is not, everyone conveniently ignores the second banjoist's initial response—everyone, that is, except the first banjoist, who will have been firmly "put down" by being deferred to verbally and then outplayed in a contest that may be either blatant or subtle. Other responses would have been possible for each player as well: one can play conservatively, by playing a "straight" Scruggs-style break, or by satisfyingly duplicating a well-known recorded version of a tune; or one can play more daringly, more extemporaneously. A well-executed version of a break with an important bluegrass pedigree may be as effective in competition as a successful improvisatory break.

Recent years have witnessed some changes in the informal setting of the parking lots. The rapid growth of the bluegrass constituency in the United States and abroad has brought together greater numbers of fans and pickers at festivals, and the unspoken understanding (or etiquette) that served the more culturally-homogeneous bluegrass aficionados of the late 1950s and 1960s has not been transmitted as clearly or effectively as the articulatory techniques of banjo-playing itself. One consequence of this boom is simple overcrowding of parking lot jam sessions, which inevitably, annoys serious musicians:

I'd like to air a complaint and suggest a solution. The problem is jam sessions at festivals. Many times there are four or five banjo players all gathered around a guitar player trying to get their musical 'rocks off.' Rick Shubb, rumor has it here in Washington, has said that two or more banjos together sound like someone dropped a tray of silverware.¹⁹

J.D. Crowe expressed the frustrations of many when he said, "Sometimes you get in a jam and there are five banjo players and everybody is playing lead. One of the reasons I don't participate in jams like that."²⁰ With so many eager

players (and especially so many eager beginning players, who must seek opportunities to play in order to improve), the overmanning of parking lot sessions has grown much worse in recent years. This too is a manifestation of a kind of competition, but it is an open and straightforward competition for playing time.

Even in a jam session with only two banjoists, parking lot etiquette demands that the limited amount of playing time devoted to banjo breaks should be shared, even when one musician's talents and abilities are clearly superior. Some of the angriest comments about competitiveness come from banjoists who have been "shut out":

Well, we were at a festival, a small festival. And about two o'clock in the morning, Blaine was running a parking lot picking session. And all of his friends that played, part of his band, and several guitar players were there. There were a lot of guitars, and I ended up bein' the only other banjo player there. I stood and watched for about fifteen or twenty minutes, just 'cause I'd heard so much about him. After a while I thought, "Well, I ought to get up here and see if I can take a lead." And I made it real obvious for about an hour. Well, not *real* obvious, but...He was just arrogant, and kind of shut me out, more than anybody else. I don't have any use for people like that.²¹

Another dimension of parking lot competition has more to do with evaluations of musicality than with the number of breaks taken by each of the participants. One hears or reads such statements as the following with increasing frequency:

I'm swearing off the parking lot; it's too competitive. There are too many "flashes," who as an old-timer put it, "They know a hell of a lot, but they don't understand anything."²²

The parking lot is a bad scene....Somewhere the simplicity and mystery have been lost. Banjo pickers are caught up in a battle with all the others to out-pick and generally out-do the next feller.²³

The informal parking lot session often makes plain the subtly-evaluated "pecking order" of the musicians, with the best musicians in the center, slightly less capable ones surrounding them, and the less aggressive beginners at the outside, more-or-less mingling with any audience that the impromptu ensemble may attract. Since all musicians face the center of this rough circle, those in the outer parts of the group may be facing the backs of others. In order for a musician to get to the literal center of attention, he must either demonstrate such great and tactful musicianship that the others give way for him, or he must literally push his way into the group. Once in the center, he can maintain his position as cynosure only as long as he can dominate the other serious challengers in improvisational versatility and tastefulness, both of which are continually assessed by the other pickers.

"Tastefulness," of course, is even harder to define than it is to incorporate into one's musicianship in an improvisatory arena like bluegrass. In practice, tastefulness depends on the perception of a congruence between a banjoist's playing choices and the playing of the other musicians during a particular number. Five-string banjo music in Scruggs-style and most derivative styles is grounded in repeated low-level articulatory units which are formulaically (and not always consciously) combined to yield higher-level units, commonly called "licks."²⁴ Licks are consciously manipulated, and are certainly the essential units of transmission of the overall style. Licks are the smallest whole articulatory units which are consciously and deliberately passed from one banjoist to another, though "rolls"—isolated right-hand picking sequences—are also passed along to beginning students (though their value is more didactic than operational). Licks cannot really be owned by an individual, but they may be treated as if they could be. Some banjoists guard their knowledge of licks jealously, or become known for using certain "signature" licks repeatedly; others share their techniques freely, and are ready to demonstrate a particular lick to all inquirers. In offering a "weird ending lick" to readers of *Banjo Newsletter*, one picker added some relevant qualifications:

Enclosed find one weird ending lick. It is submitted with the expectation that the playing of it will raise eyebrows (and lower them), confuse fellow pickers and bring their playing to a standstill. As the banjoist completes the lick unaccompanied (save by the mutterings of his or her picking buddies), all the popular stereotypes about bluegrass banjo players will be revived, leaving no doubt in any mind that a banjo picker is an hysterical, nickel-plated egomaniac clanging and clanging like a constipated robot. I call this a "watch-me-drop-the-silverware" type of ending....Learn to play it, then demonstrate the good taste to restrain [sic] from playing it.²⁵

Obviously, a banjoist with a large repertoire of multifunctional and interesting licks may be a better banjoist than one with a smaller repertoire of licks under control, but licks can be inappropriately juxtaposed or overused, and the banjoist with as much apparent technical ability may come off poorly in a covert competition because his employment of "hot licks" is obstreperous, illogical, or offensively and overtly self-aggrandizing. The competitive desideratum is not just technical ability, but the awareness that an individual's ability should mesh with and serve the musical interests of the whole band or picking group. Former Blue Grass Boy Butch Robins expressed the problem of tastefulness nicely: "A young banjo player, he doesn't want to learn how to take one note of a banjo and make it sail for a hundred yards. He wants to learn to play 25,000 notes to knock somebody's head off."²⁶

As an element in competition, the requirement that

banjo playing be seen by other competent banjoists as tasteful suggests that much of it is not seen that way at all, perhaps sometimes even among musicians of great technical virtuosity. Several banjoists I have interviewed in the past few years have told of competitive encounters in which the lack of restraint was centrally involved. One such anecdote is a marvelously compact statement of the complexity (and perhaps the symbolic import) of competition among banjoists:

I guess Pat Cloud's an incredible musician, and knows everything including the kitchen sink, and has no qualms about throwing it in, anywhere. Pat Cloud was playing in a jam session, and [professional banjoist Alan] Munde was there. And Cloud just played everything in sight. (Over, around, and through it). Yeah. Munde walked away and said, "Well, he just proved that he can piss farther than anyone else!"²⁷

While competition as an impulse is certainly not restricted to banjo players, nor even to bluegrass musicians, there is clearly a need to explain the peculiar intensity and regularity of the competition associated with bluegrass banjoists. At least four aspects of an answer suggest themselves to me; all are based both on my own experiences as a bluegrass banjo player and on the responses of the banjoists I've interviewed.

First, banjoists have long been characterized—often by non-banjoists—as sharing a common personality type. The image of the banjoist has changed remarkably with the development of various artistic constituencies centered on this instrument. Prior to and during the minstrel period, any banjoist was stereotypically a black man, though by 1830 white performers in blackface had begun the long and incredible process that remade the cultural meanings associated with the banjo.²⁸ By the Civil War, the banjo was being adopted by rural whites in the Appalachian South, and in the 1880s and 1890s, urban Northerners and Englishmen built an elite tradition for the instrument that thrived until the 1920s. In the rural stream of banjo tradition that leads ultimately to bluegrass, the player of this instrument has long been thought of as a rowdy and devil-may-care sort of fellow, an extrovert who enjoys good humor, loud stringband music, dancing, and perhaps other more sinful pleasures. The stereotype of the typical mountain banjoist was echoed in the words of pioneer folksong collector Robert W. Gordon:

The typical picker is a youth in his teens or early twenties ...His playing brings him a little dignity or standing in his community. He plays for amusement, to show off, and to aid him in his courtship.²⁹

The banjoist in the hillbilly tradition—as seen on stage and among professional performers, at least—has inherited part of the minstrel end-man's penchant for outrageousness in costume and demeanor. He apparently

enjoys being a performer, and revels in the somewhat exotic and unlicensed connotations of the instrument. Such an image arose long before the crystallization of three-finger picking styles into Scruggs-style. The long-standing association of banjo players and country comedy, too, reinforces this general connotation of the banjoist's role, though the first exemplar of bluegrass banjo, Earl Scruggs, was and is noted as an exception to the rule. Scruggs is a quiet, shy, almost introverted person socially. He avoids the "emcee" role in bands and rarely speaks on stage, and he was the first of Monroe's banjo players who did no comedy in the band's shows. On hearing Scruggs play an astonishing break to a stunned Grand Ole Opry audience, Uncle Dave Macon (who perfectly embodied the outgoing banjo player type) was said to have commented, "Well, he plays good, but he ain't a damn bit funny!"³⁰

A second sort of explanation of the intensity of competition among bluegrass banjoists focuses on the banjo's role in the bluegrass band and links it to a capacity for using instruments to express personal identity. The music produced by every bluegrass banjoist, including the shy and reticent Scruggs himself, is often seen as inherently complex, flashy, aggressive, and showy. Perhaps in Scruggs' case an assertive musicality was a compensation for shyness and social reticence, but not all banjoists are shy. If we postulate that a broad range of personality types take up the banjo in the first place, it is still important to note that many bluegrass musicians stereotypically regard all bluegrass banjoists as aggressive, pushy, or egomaniacal personalities. The likely explanation here is that the musical role of the instrument within the band leads to such perceptions, but it does not seem possible to easily or reliably link this "musical role" hypothesis with the "personality" hypothesis, for cause-and-effect may be involved in either direction. Do aggressive and extroverted people tend to take up the instrument because it reflects their character in the first place? Or does playing the banjo in bluegrass style require the development of a thoroughgoing musical assertiveness? Actually, both hypotheses need to be incorporated into a proper solution to the competition question. The technical breakthrough of Scruggs-style articulation may have attracted extroverts to the banjo because, like all such breakthroughs, it resulted in a whole new arena for the display of complexity, aggressiveness, and show. Then, as the role of the bluegrass banjo became established as a definitive part of the instrumental whole that makes up the bluegrass tradition, new pickers had to accommodate to the expectations of their fellow band members.

A third part of the answer probably lies in the characteristic construction and timbre of the banjo as it is played in bluegrass (which factors are also part of the "breakthrough" into bluegrass banjo achieved by Scruggs and

others). A modern resonated banjo with a plastic head and steel strings articulated with plastic and steel fingerpicks is a complex technological assemblage. It has been called the "hot rod of the musical instrument world," and it produces notes with a typically sharp sound and a quick decay.³¹ Where many old-time banjoists produced a "ringing" choral sound and coordinated their treatment of melody in unison with the fiddle or other lead instruments, the bluegrass banjoist creates a "cutting" sound with short, rapid notes which divide each 2/4 measure of bluegrass time into eight bursts of sound, electric in their intensity. The bluegrass banjoist rarely plays in strict unison with anyone else in the band. The aesthetic terminology of bluegrass banjo players who attempt to describe the ideal sound of their instrument are germane here: pickers speak of instruments that crackle, pop, bite, crack, bark, slash, and cut. As one picker described that desirable "pre-War" sound, "it growls, knocks you up against the wall, slaps you in the face, peels the paint off the back of your head...."³² The intense timbre of the instrument and the quick succession of short notes make it difficult for two or more bluegrass banjoists to play together without producing music that all will regard as cluttered, frantic, and confused. While it is possible to work out so-called "twin" banjo parts, in which one musician plays a note-for-note harmony with another, that kind of playing completely precludes improvisation and requires rehearsal in many cases.³³ To the best of my knowledge, no contemporary amateur or professional bluegrass band regularly employs two banjo players who play together as a regular part of the band's performances. It is simply a truism of bluegrass aesthetics that "two banjos is one too many."³⁴

Fourth, the rapid growth of bluegrass after the music's introduction to college audiences in 1959 (and again, after the bluegrass festivals began in 1965 yet again after *Bonnie and Clyde* in 1967, and *Deliverance* in 1972) meant that the pickers who confronted one another in the parking lots no longer drew on common cultural roots. Even the qualified designation "folkstyle" is impossible to apply as a common denominator for the heterogeneous constituency that now supports bluegrass music. While the cultural image to which all bluegrass pickers repeatedly pay homage is that of the music's regional origins in the upland South, it is more a matter of artistic imagery than of lived ethnographic reality for a growing number of them.³⁵ Increased access to bluegrass outside the upland South and the mass publication of bluegrass instruction manuals stimulated the spread of bluegrass music as an instrumental norm, and of bluegrass banjo as a technique.³⁶ However, the values of the folk or folk-like society which gave rise to hillbilly music and early bluegrass cannot be and have not been transmitted, except as a romantic image, through such mass-cultural media. Accordingly, the banjoists who crowd the jam sessions at festivals and compete

in ways that draw attention to their competitiveness are often those who were drawn to bluegrass because its cultural value for them was exotic. They compete without subtlety at first because their understanding of bluegrass is grounded in technical articulation only. For novice banjoists from outside the original nidus of bluegrass it is, as New York banjoist (and sociologist) Peter Wernick has pointed out:

...very easy for banjo players to get on a hierarchical ladder; to see themselves with certain banjo players not as good as them or certain banjo players better than they. They regard their whole banjo playing as an endeavor to increase their status on the 'banjo ladder.' It's a most natural thing to do because musicians compare themselves to each other and other people always compare musicians.³⁷

While the characteristic personality of banjoists, the complexity of the playing style, the timbre of the instrument, and the increasing heterogeneity of the bluegrass constituency all support the competitive banjoist, it seems clear even from this brief treatment that competition is a complex matter which can be viewed from many directions. Whatever its origins, competition is often interpreted as a direct and unfortunate consequence of musicians' insecurities about their own playing abilities, and not at all an inevitable feature of the music. In fact, where Monroe extolled the virtues of competition by warning that another musician "will come on up and pass you if you don't stay in the collar," banjoist Raymond W. McLain argues that the race must inevitably be lost:

There's no future in a competitive attitude, because there's always going to be someone who's going to come along and be able to play the run better than you do. There'll *always* be someone better.³⁸

Yet competition does appear inevitable in bluegrass, and particularly between bluegrass banjoists. In the last analysis, we should recognize competition as an omnipresent impulse in American culture and a potential aspect of every kind of performance. Bluegrass banjoists sometimes lament the existence of overt competitions, and may cringe inwardly in the midst of covert ones, but the inevitability and regularity of all kinds of competition in bluegrass serve the music well by emphatically reminding the individual of his musical responsibilities to himself and his fellow band-members.

Notes

1. The original 1955 MGM recording of "Feuding Banjos" by Don Reno and Arthur "Guitar Boogie" Smith was likewise an example of this second form of competition, since it pitted a tenor banjo against Reno's five-string; though both instruments were *banjos*, they are as dissimilar from an articulatory point of view as any two different instruments in a conventional bluegrass band.
2. Cf. Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, Vol. II (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976), 319-20.
3. Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Northwestern University Press, 1964), 134-37.
4. Cf. Barre Toelken, "Folklore, Worldview, and Communication," in Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth Goldstein, eds., *Folklore: Performance and Communication* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), 270.
5. Robert Redfield, "The Folk Society," *American Journal of Sociology* 52(January, 1947): 293-308.
6. Cf. Archie Green, *Only a Miner: Studies in Recorded Coal-Mining Songs*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 27-28.
7. Redfield, "The Folk Society," 300.
8. James Rooney, *Bossmen: Bill Monroe and Muddy Waters* (New York: Hayden Book Co., 1971), 59-61.
9. Ibid.
10. Interview with Raymond W. McLain, *Banjo Newsletter* 10(October, 1983): 6.
11. Interview with J.D. Crowe, *Banjo Newsletter*, 3(September, 1976): 7.
12. Other causes certainly underlie these contests as well. Archie Green has called attention to the role of popular pulp magazine publishers in establishing topical song-writing contests, which "have functioned for nearly a century without close examination by folklorists." (*Only a Miner*, 410). Just as the song-contests stimulated multiple texts on given mine-disasters, instrumental music contests have spawned novel arrangements of familiar tunes.
13. I am grateful to Richard A. Peterson of Vanderbilt University for his comments on this point. As he suggests, competition in bluegrass may arise from technical innovation in the same way that it did in jazz after the breakthroughs of Louis Armstrong's trumpet playing of 1916 and Charlie Parker's saxophone of 1940. Peterson clarifies his idea of the crucial "aesthetic moment" in jazz evolution in "A Process Model of the Folk, Pop, and Fine Art Phases of Jazz," in Charles Nanry, ed., *American Music: From Storyville to Woodstock* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, E.P. Dutton, 1972), 135-149.
14. Sonny Osborne, "Keep On the Sonny Side," *Banjo Newsletter* 8(January, 1981): 12.
15. *Bluegrass Unlimited* 5(October, 1970): 14-15.
16. Note that the anonymous diarist and picker responded to the indirect competition of the 1967 Berryville [Virginia] festival by *not taking his banjo out of the case*. Many banjoists not only take the same sort of covert action themselves, but also have been frustrated by others around them who may compete by not playing at all. Allen Shelton, professional banjoist from Reidsville, N.C., commented in a March 1977 interview in *Banjo Newsletter* that though he knew Hoke Jenkins, he could never get him to play. Sonny Osborne has made the same observation;

since so many amateur banjoists are awe-stricken by his reputation, he has had trouble getting into parking lot jam sessions, for they simply put their instruments away when he comes along.

17. Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 31.

18. Interview with Ed Narragansett, Bloomington, Indiana, 7 November 1974.

19. "Licks and Letters," *Banjo Newsletter* 4 (August, 1977): 29.

20. Interview with J.D. Crowe, *Banjo Newsletter* 3 (September, 1976): 6.

21. Interview with Dean Osborne, Lexington, Ky., 13 February 1984.

22. Bob Gaddis, "The Resonator," *Banjo Newsletter* 4 (December, 1976): 11.

23. Bob Gaddis, "The Resonator," *Banjo Newsletter* 3 (January, 1976): 7.

24. Thomas A. Adler, "Manual Formulaic Composition: Innovation in Bluegrass Banjo Style," *Journal of Country Music* 5 (Summer, 1974): 55-64.

25. "Licks and Letters," *Banjo Newsletter* 4 (July, 1977): 25.

26. Interview with Butch Robins, *Banjo Newsletter* 8 (May, 1981): 4.

27. Interview with Bobby Landis, Bloomington, Indiana, 4 February 1975.

28. Jay Bailey, "Historical Origins and Stylistic Development of the Five String Banjo," *Journal of American Folklore* 85 (1972): 58-65.

29. Robert W. Gordon, "The Folk Song of America: Banjo Tunes," *New York Times Magazine*, 1 January 1928; cited in Wayne Erbsen, "Closet Banjo," *Banjo Newsletter* 7 (September, 1980): 16.

30. Cf. Charles Wolfe, "Uncle Dave Macon," in Bill C. Malone and Judith McCulloh, eds., *Stars of Country Music: Uncle Dave Macon to Johnny Rodriguez* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 49-50; and Neil V. Rosenberg, "Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs," *Stars of Country Music*, 260.

31. Interview with Alan Munde, *Banjo Newsletter* 4 (January, 1977): 7. On the liner notes to Billy Faier, *The Art of the Five-String Banjo* (Riverside RLP 12-813), Kenneth Goldstein stated that the college banjoists he was meeting around 1957 tended to major in the sciences or mathematics: "Perhaps it is this proclivity for mechanics which has led some banjo players into a mania for gadgets and attachments and to a preoccupation with the techniques rather than the art of the five-string banjo."

32. Jack Hatfield, "Scruggs Corner: Questionnaire Results," *Banjo Newsletter* 7 (November, 1979): 18.

33. Several important early recordings featured twin-banjo arrangements: Larry Richardson and Happy Smith played Scruggs-style and clawhammer-style banjos together on their 1953 recording "I'm Lonesome," on the Blue Ridge label; and the Osborne Brothers' 1956 release "Ruby" (MGM K 12308) included the novel use of twin Scruggs-style banjos. An entire LP of double-banjo material is *The Sensational Twin Banjos of Eddie Adcock and Don Reno* (Rebel SLP 1482).

34. Murphy Henry, "The Banjo Teacher: It's a Picking Party," *Banjo Newsletter* 11 (February, 1984): 13.

35. George O. Carney, "Bluegrass Grows All Around: The Spatial Dimensions of a Country Music Style," *Journal of Geography* 73 (April, 1974): 34-55.

36. Peter Wernick's important banjo instruction manual, *Bluegrass Banjo* (New York: Oak Publications, 1974), has sold over 100,000 copies in the ten years since its publication.

37. Thomas A. Adler, "The Concept of Nidality and Its Potential Application to Folklore," *Folklore Forum*, Bibliographic and Special Series No. 12, [1974], *Conceptual Problems in Contemporary Folklore Study*, 1-5. Interview with Peter Wernick, *Banjo Newsletter* 6 (July, 1979): 9.

38. Rooney, *Bossmen*, 41. Interview with Raymond W. McLain, *Banjo Newsletter* 10 (October 1983): 7. I wish to thank my fellow banjoist and friend Frank Godbey for his insightful comments on this final point in particular and on the topic of competition in general.

D. Dix Hollis - Early Paramount Recording Artist and Fiddler Who Challenged the World

Joyce Cauthen

In the early 1920s, record companies catered to fans of classical music, gospel and blues, and contemporary dance music. With the commercial success of Fiddlin' John Carson's Okeh recordings in 1923, they discovered a new audience. Recording executives began to scout the South for "hillbilly" fiddlers, stringbands, and singers to please rural audiences. Paramount found its first country fiddler in the remote west Alabama town of Sulligent.

D. Dix Hollis was hardly a hillbilly. His grandfather, Darrell Upright Hollis, had established a 1500-acre plantation with 125 slaves at Moscow, Alabama, and his father, Daniel William Hollis, had served as a state legislator.¹ D. Dix Hollis was born on the Old Moscow plantation on 14 September 1861, during the early days of the Civil War, and as a young man (1883-84) studied medicine at the University of Physicians and Surgeons in Baltimore, Maryland. During the five-month course in which he earned his medical diploma, Hollis alternated between reading medical books and playing his fiddle until midnight each night.² He took advantage of his stay in Baltimore, Hollis wrote, to study with "the best Italian fiddler of the day" from whom he "learned some of the most beautiful and opporatic [sic] and most classical tunes ever played on the Fiddle."³

His playing on the Paramount recordings, however, suggests that he was more influenced by his original mentor at home than by the fine Italian fiddler. According to Hollis, his first instruction came after "Ben Guyton, one of our [former] slaves noticed my great talent and love for the fiddle and taught me all he could about it. When 10 years old I could play all his tunes." Hollis also mentioned John Tucker, Dirk Holms, Dr. R.J. Redden, Marion and Levy Gibbs, and B.H. Holliday as "good old time fiddlers" who lived near him.⁴

By the time Hollis recorded for Paramount in 1924, he was a successful physician in the small town of Sulligent, near the Old Moscow planation. On his letterhead were the words:

Dr. D. Dix Hollis
Dealer in
Drugs and Perfumery
Hollis' Chill Tonic and Spike Oil Liniment
City Health Officer

His chill tonic was considered to be an effective treatment for malaria. He also delivered babies, raised a family of his own, played cornet at the Methodist Church, and fiddled at community gatherings and many of the small fiddle contests held in houses all over Lamar County. We

can only speculate about how he came to the attention of Paramount. He may have written the company and offered to be their first fiddler, or perhaps he entered one of the annual conventions in Birmingham and thereby came to the attention of E.E. Forbes, owner of the largest music store in Alabama. Forbes was best known as a piano dealer, but also distributed records and may have had some influence with recording companies.

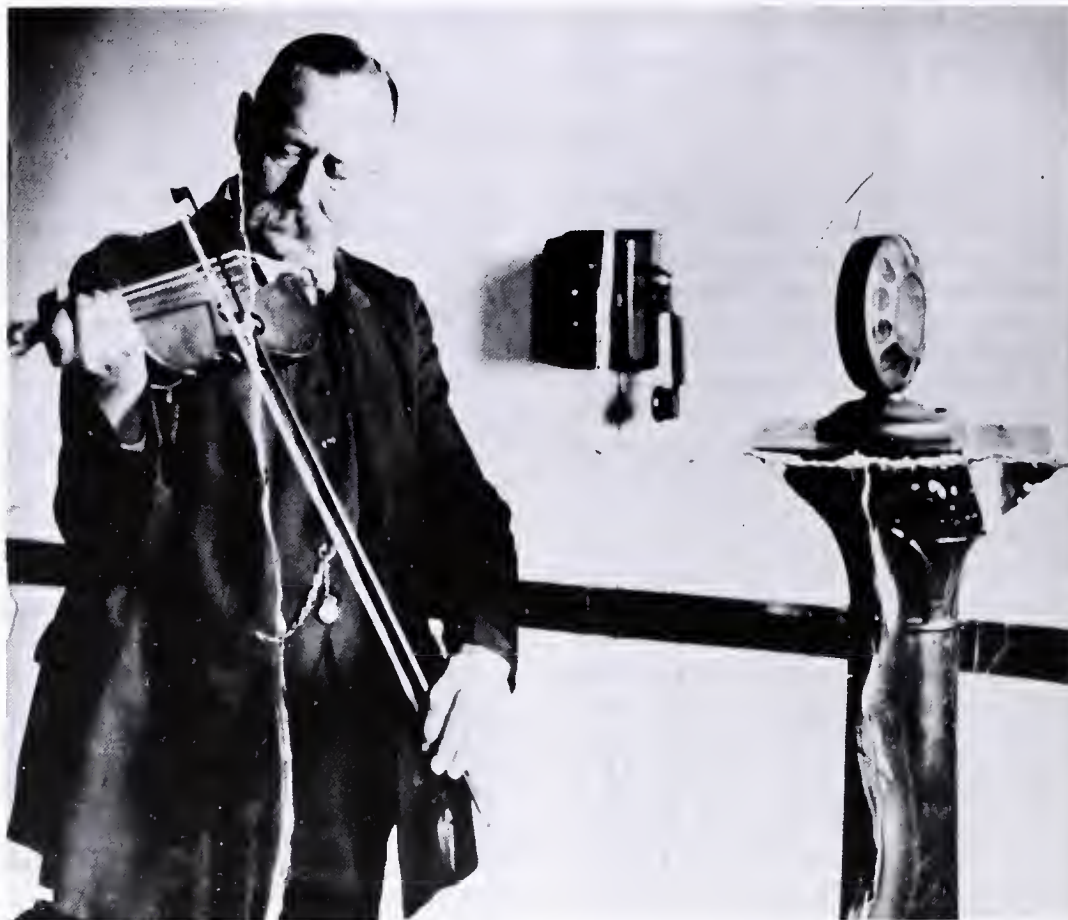
At any rate, Hollis, age sixty-three, traveled to New York City with Forbes in 1924. Hollis, in 1926, wrote of this experience: "Two years ago I went to New York City and the Paramount Recording Co. made me 12 record [sic] some of which you will see above. They are for sale by the doz. at Port Washington, Min. by Paramount Recording Co."⁵

Unfortunately, no list accompanied Hollis's copy of the letter and only four sides are known to have been released: "Turkey in de Straw" (Master #1790-1) and "Walking in the Parlor" (Master #1791-1) were issued as Paramount 33153; "Dixie" and "Yankee Doodle" (Master #1797-1), and "The Girl Slipped Down" (Master #1798-1) were released as Silvertone 3513. The master numbers indicate that he recorded at least nine sides, and scholars trying to piece together discographic data on Paramount will note the probability that Hollis's recordings account for twelve of the thirteen gaps between #1786/87 (Eddie Green and Billy Wilson) and #1801/02 (Faye Barnes).⁶

Paramont described the recordings as "solo violin" pieces. Hollis was of the old school who performed unaccompanied, though younger fiddlers, such as Charlie Stripling, who was born in 1896 and lived in the same county, were accustomed to having guitar accompaniment. Hollis's recordings indicate that he, unlike many unaccompanied fiddlers, played in a standard tuning, maintaining a regular meter and fairly consistent pattern in the repetition of the various parts of the tunes. He provided his own rhythm with his strong, staccato bowing, being what some call a "jig" fiddler, one who plays one short bow stroke per note.

Hollis's "The Girl Slipped Down" is a vigorous breakdown tune, reminiscent of "Sally Gooden." His "Turkey in de Straw" is similar to modern versions except that on the third and fifth times through he replaces the melody of the verse with a variation suggesting a cakewalk or humorous allusion to a turkey strut. His complex version of "Walking in the Parlor" best shows his virtuosity and vigor.⁷

According to the *Lamar Democrat*, Hollis's records were



D. Dix Hollis, probably taken at WAPI in Auburn in 1926. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Chloe Weaver)

still selling well in 1926 when Hollis took the opportunity to involve himself in the recording industry's newly emerging rival. Alabama's first radio stations had opened in 1922 in Birmingham and Auburn, then merged on the campus of Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University) in 1925 under call letters WAPI.⁸ By September of the following year, the *Auburn Plainsman* was able to boast that this 1,000 watt station "is as large as any other broadcasting station of the South, and has many advantages by being the newest and most modern."⁹ The *Opelika Daily News* reported that people had listened to WAPI in the State of Washington and Vancouver Island, British Columbia.¹⁰

Apparently, the residents of Sulligent, two hundred miles away, could hear WAPI well enough to conceive the idea of sending Dr. Hollis to show the rest of the world how the fiddle was played in their home town. They had two incentives for doing so. First the station itself encouraged musical contests. In announcing a high school band contest on the air, Harry Herzfield, a banker, farmer, and trustee of the college, said that "Alabama possesses talent with which not only our state, but every radio listener

should become acquainted, thereby encouraging and developing these talents and giving them a wide field for expression. This should be among the most useful services that WAPI can render."¹¹

The contest was also inspired by Henry Ford, who was doing much to reinterest Americans in old-time music and dance. Few citizens did not know of the fiddlers' conventions sponsored by Ford dealers and prizes that Ford lavished on his winning fiddlers.¹² National magazines featured articles on the contests and even the weekly county newspapers in Alabama carried wire service articles on the doings of Ford champions Mellie Dunham and John Baltzell. Another Ford favorite, "Uncle" Bunt Stephens, frequently performed in west Alabama, with medals on his chest and prize ribbons hanging from his fiddle. Hollis, himself, may have contacted Ford on one occasion. A news article stated that Hollis had a fiddle presented to him fifty years previously which was made in 1717, and "it is reported that Henry Ford is interested in buying it."¹³

Thus the Sulligent Commercial Club was eager to take part in the new age of radio and to show the world that they had a fiddler worthy of attention. After making the

proper arrangements with WAPI, they sent out a lengthy press release which appeared in several state newspapers. It announced that "preparatory to a big fiddler's contest over radio, Dr. D. Dix Hollis, famous fiddler of Sulligent, will give challenge programs from Station WAPI in Auburn, Alabama, April 23 and 24." The Commercial Club issued a challenge "To the World" and encouraged fiddlers everywhere to "tune in on Station WAPI during either or both of his challenge programs in order to get an idea of what they will have to compete with when they meet him in contest some time next fall, either October or November." All fiddlers who answered the challenge at that time would be required by Dr. Hollis "to confine themselves to 'the good old tunes of long ago.'" Among them he named: "Billie in the Lowground," "Turkey in the Straw," "Leather Breeches," "Gray Eagle," "Dixie," "Bonnie Blue Flag," "Hoplight Ladies," "None Greater Than Lincoln," "Lone Indian," "Sallie in the Wildwood," and "Mocking Bird."¹⁴

An announcement published the following week in the *Opelika Daily News* stated: "The people of Sulligent declare that no better fiddler can be found than Dr. Hollis, and that they are expecting him to become the champion radio fiddler as a result of the contest next fall." It quoted Hollis's offer to "play all night if necessary."¹⁵ We do not know, however, if it was necessary. The challenge probably did take place, with the accompanying photograph of Hollis being made at that performance, but there was no news coverage of the challenge and no mention of the follow-up contest which was to be held that fall. In fact, after WAPI's first year of broadcasting, announcements of the weekly radio schedule seldom mentioned country music of any kind, though the station was oriented toward a rural audience and frequently broadcast lectures on egg production and insect control. Instead, WAPI treated its listeners to violin, piano, and vocal renderings which Hollis would have termed as being of "the most beautiful and opporatic" kind.

Hollis's radio challenge did not seem to have much of an impact, but in Sulligent he was still the "brag" fiddler. One citizen of that community, Mrs. Inez Gibbs, remembered a local event held a year after the radio contest was to have taken place:

On August 20, 1927, S.J. Gibbs, a Master Degree man in vocational agriculture from Auburn bringing his bride, was sent to this western Alabama town, by the State Department to establish the teaching of agriculture to the men and boys of this community.

Immediately we met the town Doctor, Dr. Dixie Hollis. He had served this community all his years and was still doctoring from his office. Being an elderly man his days of house calls and the delivering of babies were about over.

In late October it was suddenly announced there would be a fiddlers' convention at the school on Friday night.

Preparations began at once and the place was packed with listeners, some wearing legging boots. The fiddlers made a complete circle on the stage. Near the center sat Dr. Hollis. He stole the show, first with "Turkey in the Straw." He arose and with the fiddlers dance [in which the fiddler dances and plays at the same time] he received the cheers of the crowd by his rendition of "Put on Your Old Gray Bonnet."¹⁶

D. Dix Hollis died the following December at age sixty-six. Though he did not become world famous, his high standing in his community as both a doctor and a fiddler is clear, and his importance extends beyond west Alabama. In his enthusiasm for old-time fiddling he put his music on record, wrote a personal fiddle history which included names of tunes and fiddlers, and brought the old tunes before the public on radio. In doing so he has left a valuable record of old-time fiddling.

Notes

1. Acee, Joe G. *Lamar County History* (Vernon, Alabama: *Lamar Democrat*, 1972), 6.

2. *Lamar Democrat*, 21 April 1926.

3. Letter from D. Dix Hollis to Mrs. Edward McGhee, 10 July 1926. Mrs. McGhee had requested information about Hollis for a book to be published by the University of North Carolina. As of this writing, no such book or manuscript has been found. A copy of this letter, Hollis's photograph, and many items of information were made available to me by Hollis's daughter, Mrs. Chloe Weaver, now deceased.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. See Norm Cohen's liner notes to JEMF LP 103 *Paramount Old Time Tunes*, concerning discographical data for Paramount recordings.

7. "Walking in the Parlor" has recently been reissued on *Possum Up a Gum Stump: Home, Field, and Commercial Recordings of Alabama Fiddlers* (Alabama Traditions 103), an album featuring Alabama's "brag" fiddlers of the past, such as Hollis, Y.Z. Hamilton, and Charlie Stripling, as well as living fiddlers who play in older styles.

8. *A Most Memorable 60 Years, WAPI Radio* (Birmingham: WAPI, 1982).

9. *Auburn Plainsman*, September 1926.

10. *Opelika Daily News*, April 1926.

11. *Opelika Daily News*, 20 March 1926.

12. For more information about Henry Ford's role in old time fiddling, see Don Roberson, "Uncle Bunt Stephens: Champion Fiddler," *Old Time Music* 5 (Summer 1972): 4-6 and Paul F. Wells, "Mellie Dunham, 'Maine's Champion Fiddler,'" *JEMF Quarterly*, 12 (Autumn 1976): 112-118.

13. *Lamar Democrat*, 21 April 1926. Hollis's fiddle remained in his family.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Opelika Daily News*, 22 April 1926.

16. Gibbs, Inez. Sulligent, Ala. Personal note to author, 7 February 1984.

"By The Ozark Trail": The Image Of The Ozarks in Popular and Folk Songs

W.K. McNeil

Few regions of America have been the object of as much attention as the Ozarks, that mountain chain that spreads across parts of five states.¹ Travelers, novelists, jokebook compilers, movie makers, television show writers, comic strip artists, historians, painters, poets, and popular songwriters, among others, have all recorded their images of the Ozarks. Some of these people put down for posterity what they felt to be an accurate account of the region; others were interested solely in entertaining. Whatever their intent, together they created a picture, or more accurately several pictures, of the Ozarks that found widespread appeal. Whether factual or not, to many people the images found in these various sources were real and, for a large percentage of America's population, their only contact with the region. Despite the significance of these depictions, they have largely been ignored by historians. One possible reason for this oversight is that, in order to fully comprehend such imagery, one must search in the popular culture and folk materials that historians traditionally ignore. Indeed, until relatively recently most historians have agreed with Homer C. Hockett and Allen Johnson that such source items have little positive value and are best left alone.² Merely saying something is so does not make it fact, and most contemporary historians would disagree with the extreme position of Hockett and Johnson. After all, nearly four decades have passed since Henry Nash Smith demonstrated in *Virgin Land* (1950) that literature, even of the most ephemeral kind, is useful in explicating history. More recently, William Lynwood Montell in *The Saga of Coe Ridge* (1970) and Gladys Marie Fry in *Night Riders in Black Folk History* (1975) have shown how valuable folk traditions can be to historians. Of course, other publications could be cited but these few sufficiently make the point that changes have occurred in the thinking of historians. There has even been a study of various popular images of the Appalachian Mountains but nothing comparable for the Ozarks.³ The present essay is an attempt to partially fill the void by discussing depictions of the Ozarks contained in popular and folk songs.

As used here "folk" refers to material passed on orally, informally, which becomes traditional and undergoes change over space and time, is formulaic and often, but not necessarily, of anonymous origin. "Popular" refers to material of a less durable nature that is intended for a mass audience and is passed on primarily by formal means and that usually does not undergo change over space or time, is not of anonymous origin, and is often, but not necessarily,

formulaic. Popular and folk songs about the Ozarks have probably reached a greater audience than any other type of cultural material dealing with the region. Whether they were the most influential source in shaping American attitudes about the Ozarks is a moot point. There can, however, be little doubt that they had some connection with such ideas, even if only as a reflector of opinions formed otherwise. Beyond that, the great value of the songs is that they were not intended as historical documents, merely as entertainment. Thus, they are like pictures taken from hiding places: they capture the subjects unawares and offer a more candid body of opinion than can be found in more formal sources.

There are three categories of songs containing material relevant to this discussion. First are those songs having the word "Ozark" in the title; second, songs lacking "Ozark" in the title, but generally understood to be about Ozark mountaineers⁴; and third, songs not usually understood to be about the Ozarks but which have some references to the region. Together they are the source of not one, but several images of the Ozarks. These various depictions are of two general types: comic and sentimental. Although the comic songs were not necessarily more enduring or more frequently written than the sentimental pieces, they were the earliest. One of the best known comic numbers associated with the Ozarks came into existence not long after the mountain range achieved its name.

No one knows what the name Ozark means or who first used it but most authorities believe it to be an Anglicization of a French phrase and, because there is no more definitive explanation, this is as good as any. It is also generally conceded that Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1793-1864) was one of the earliest popularizers of the name when in an 1821 book he referred to the region he toured in 1818-1819 as the Ozarks.⁵ Less than three decades after Schoolcraft's book was published, "Arkansas Traveler" appeared in print; it is the first song relevant to the present study. It may be slightly inaccurate to label the "Traveler" a song since in its earliest known printing, in 1847, it was merely a tune. This edition, by one William Cumming about whom nothing else is known, had the lengthy title "The Arkansas Traveller and Rackinsac Waltz."⁶ There is good evidence, though, that the tune predated the 1847 publication by several years, not the least of this support being that Cumming did not claim the piece as his own, he is cited merely as the arranger. As far as is now known the earliest printing of the dialogue was a broadside issued

sometime during the years 1858-1860. This text credits Colonel Sandford C. Faulkner (1803-1874) as composer of the tune and author of the dialogue; both claims are dubious.⁷

Large portions of the dialogue predate the 1850s by many years, in some cases by centuries. Two of the exchanges date back at least to the early sixteenth century. The remark about fixing the roof so it won't leak first appeared in print in Henrich Bebel's *Facetiae* (1509) and the one about the river being fordable because ducks crossed it earlier was originally published in Johannes Pauli's *Schimpfund Ernst* (1522).⁸ Since the publication of the Faulkner version, the dialogue has been frequently performed to the same tune. It has appeared on several commercial recordings, of which most notable are various cylinder issues by early pop singer Len Spencer (1867-1914). Spencer's renditions have been called among the most popular comic novelty pieces on record in the pre-World War I era.⁹ The "Traveler" was not printed as a song until 1917 and this version achieved very little popularity.

Although the title suggests that the piece could be set anywhere in Arkansas it is commonly thought to take place in the Ozarks. This belief is aided by a story told in support of Faulkner's claim to the dialogue and tune:

The story, it is said, was founded on a little incident which occurred in the campaign of 1840, when he made the tour of the state in company with the Hon. A.H. Sevier, Gov. Fulton, Chester Ashley, and Gov. Yell. One day, in the Boston mountains, the party approached a squatter for information of the route, and Col. "Sandy" was made spokesman of the company, and it was upon his witty responses the tune and story were founded.¹⁰

Exactly what image did the "Traveler" provide of the squatter? Although some people may not think so, it is a portrait that has both negative and positive features. The Ozarker of the dialogue is a backwoodsman who has few possessions, lives in a dilapidated cabin, is naturally distrustful of strangers, most likely because he has not had much contact with them, has some interest in music, is lazy, hospitable after he gets to know a person, and lives in a region of very poor roads where the extremes of weather are considerable. The chief characteristic, though, is that the Ozarker is a man of great wit who gives the stranger more than he bargains for. These features are clearly evident in the Faulkner text of "The Arkansas Traveler," which by many authorities is considered to be not only the earliest extant version but the best:

Traveler—Halloo, stranger.

Squatter—Hello yourself.

T—Can I get to stay all night with you?

S—No, sir, you can't git to—

T—Have you any spirits here?

S—Lots uv 'em; Sal seen one last night by that ar ol hollar gum, and it nearly skeered her to death.

T—You mistake my meaning; have you any liquor?

S—Had some yesterday, but Ole bose he got in and lapped all uv it out'n the pot.

T—You don't understand; I don't mean pot liquor. I'm wet and cold and want some whisky. Have you got any?

S—Oh, yes—I drunk the last this mornin'.

T—I'm hungary; haven't had a thing since morning; can't you give me something to eat?

S—Hain't a durned thing in the house. Not a mouffull uv meat, nor a dust uv meal here.

T—Well, can't you give my horse something?

S—Got nothin' to feed him on.

T—How far is it to the next house?

S—Stranger! I don't know, I've never been thar.

T—Well, do you know who lives here?

S—Yes zir!

T—As I'm so bold, then, what might your name be?

S—It might be Dick, and it might be Tom; but it lacks right smart uv it.

T—Sir! will you tell me where this road goes to?

S—It's never gone any whar since I've lived here; It's always thar when I git up in the mornin'.

T—Well, how far is it to where it forks?

S—It don't fork at all; but it splits up like the devil.

T—As I'm not likely to get to any other house to night, can't you let me sleep in yours; and I'll tie my horse to a tree, and do without anything to eat or drink?

S—My house leaks. Thar's only one dry spot in it, and me and Sal sleeps on it. And that thar tree is the ole woman's persimon; you can't tie to it, 'caze she don't want 'em shuk off. She 'lows to make beer out'n um.

T—Why don't you finish covering your house and stop the leaks?

S—It's been rainin' all day.

T—Well, why don't you do it in dry weather?

S—It don't leak then.

T—As there seems to be nothing alive about your place but children, how do you do here anyhow?

S—Putty well, I thank you, how do you do yourself?

T—I mean what do you do for a living here?

S—Keep tavern and sell whisky.

T—Well, I told you I wanted some whisky.

S—Stranger, I bought a bar'l more'n a week ago. You see, me and Sal went shars. After we got it here, we only had a bit betweenst us, and Sal she didn't want to use hern fust, nor me mine. You see I had a spiggin in one eend, and she in tother. So she takes a drink out'n my eend, and pays me the bit for it; then I'd take one out'n hern, and give her the bit. Well, we's getting long fust-rate, till Dick, durned skulking skunk, he born a hole on the bottom to suck at, and the next time I went to buy a drink, they wont none thar.

T—I'm sorry your whisky's all gone; but, my friend, why don't you play the balance of that tune?

S—It's got no balance to it.

T—I mean you don't play the whole of it.

S—Stranger, can you play the *fiddul*?

T—Yes, a little, sometimes.

S—You don't look like a fiddlur, but ef you think you can play any more onto that thar tune, you kin just try it. (The traveler takes the fiddle and plays the whole of it.)

S—Stranger, tuck a half a duzen cheers and sot down. Sal, stir yourself round like a six-horse team in a mud hold. Go round in the hollar whar I killed that buck this mornin', cut off some of the best pieces, and fotch it and cook it for me and this gentleman, d'rectly. Raise up the board under the head of the bed, and got the ole black jug I hid from Dick, and gin us some whisky; I know thar's some left yit. Til, drive ole Bose out't the bread-tray, then climb up in the loft, and git the rag that's got the sugar tied in it. Dick, carry the gentleman's hoss round under the shead, give him so fodder and corn; much as he kin eat.

Til—Dad, they ain't knives enuff for to sot the table.

S—Whar's big butch, little butch, ole case, cob-handle, granny's knife, and the one I handled yesterday? That's nuff to sot any gentleman's table, outer you've lost um. Durn me, stranger, ef you can't stay as long as you please, and I'll give you plenty to eat and to drink. Will you have coffey for supper?

T—Yes, sir.

S—I'll be hanged if you do, tho', we don't have nothin' that way here, but Grub Hyson, and I reckon it's mighty good with sweetnin'.¹¹ Play away, stranger, you kin sleep on the dry spot to-night.

T—(After about two hours fiddling.) My friend, can't you tell me about the road I'm to travel to-morrow?

S—To-morrow! Stranger, you won't git out'n these diggins for six weeks. But when it fits so you kin start, you see that big sloo over thar? Well, you have to git crost that, then you take the road up the bank, and in about a mile you'll come to a two-acre-and-a-half cornpatch. The corn's mityly in the weeds, but you needn't mind that; jist tide on. About a mile and a half or two miles from thar, you'll cum to the damdest swamp you ever struck in all your travels; it's boggy enouff to mire a saddle-blanket. Thar's a fust rate road about six feet under that.

T—How am I to get at it?

S—You can't get at it nary time, till the weather stiffens down sum. Well, about a mile beyant, you come to a place whar thar's no roads. You kin take the right hand ef you want to; you'll foller it a mile or so, and you'll find its run out; you'll then have to come back and try the left; when you git about two miles on that, you may know you're wrong, fur they ain't any road thar. You'll then think you're mity lucky ef you kin find the way back to my house, whar you kin cum and play on thata'r tune as long as you please.¹²

Later versions of the "Traveler" that appeared with music generally agree with the image provided in Faulkner's dialogue. Mose Case's version which appeared in 1862 or 1863 makes the contrast between the squatter and the traveler greater by identifying the latter as "an Eastern man" (a euphemism for someone from the North) who is on foot rather than horseback. The most

striking difference, however, is that the squatter is less hospitable than in the Faulkner text, causing the traveler to leave after supper. Nevertheless, the Case version contains several of the same witticisms and adds some not in the earlier text.¹³ In 1900 Thomas Wilson (1832-1902), an archaeologist with the United States National Museum, recalled a version of the "Arkansas Traveler" as it was performed in Salem, Ohio, in the early 1850s. According to Wilson, the tune and dialogue were one of the major entertainments at local taverns. The performances were largely improvisatory but quite elaborate. Basically Wilson's text is that of Case but it does have some new features. One is that the squatter provides shorter, more evasive answers to the traveler's questions. Another is his fear that the stranger may not know all of the tune and the latter's refusal to play the first part.¹⁴ In 1901 Len Spencer recorded the first of his several renditions and, perhaps because of the requirements of cylinder records, his texts consist of ten relatively short questions and answers.¹⁵ A 1917 version by David Stevens, set to music by Victor N. Pierpont, reduces the dialogue to the single theme of the leaking roof.¹⁶ A 1932 version collected by Mellinger E. Henry from Samuel Harmon, Cade's Cove, Tennessee, reduces the dialogue to just three questions and answers—an indication of the reductionism found in most subsequent twentieth century texts.¹⁷

A version collected in 1933 by Vance Randolph places the encounter between the traveler and the squatter near Russellville, Arkansas.¹⁸ A 1953 version collected in Alabama by Ray Browne consists solely of several short questions and answers generally following the pattern of Case's text. It is, however, unclear whether the traveler spends the night or not and the tune is not even mentioned. It also adds a new motif in the concluding statement: "Hey, Sal, get the churn cloth and clean this baby's nose. I do despise nastiness."¹⁹ Finally, a Kentucky version collected by Leonard Roberts in 1955 consists solely of nine questions spoken in between banjo performances of the tune. Once again there is no mention of the fiddle. There is also another new motif suggesting that the mountaineer is very fertile:

How many chillern hav you got?

I don't know. Sal, roll a punkin' under the bed and run 'em out and count 'em.²⁰

Most of the more recent versions have shown a reduction of the long dialogue of older texts to a set of short comic questions and answers that are loosely connected. Much of the point of older versions is lost and there is little indication where the repartee takes place. Only the reference to Little Rock identifies it as being set in Arkansas, but that mention is missing from several versions. Only one recent text, a 1961 commercial recording by the Stanley Brothers, uses the city's name in the title.²¹ Many of the

same motifs found in older texts occur in more recent versions but they are expressed more succinctly and the entire piece is rather amorphous. These examples of the "Traveler" have succeeded in descending to what James Masterson calls "the level of silliness."²²

There are at least three ways of regarding the images found in the "Arkansas Traveler." Like all humor involving ethnic or cultural groups, such images can be regarded as constituting either a wholly negative depiction of Arkansawyers, or a put-down of outsiders, especially those from the "eastern states." The third alternative is the one that seems to be accepted by most people, namely that the dialogue contains derogatory images of certain Arkansans, but it is not mean spirited. Even so, at an early time in American history the "Traveler" indelibly associated certain negative stereotypes with residents of Arkansas, especially those living in the Ozark section of the state.

Another humorous song of uncertain origin that appeared shortly after the "Traveler" continued some of the stereotypes found in the earlier number and in some respects was even harsher on citizens of the state. This ballad, variously titled "The State of Arkansaw," "The Arkansaw Navvy," "The Arkansas Emigrant," "Bill Stafford," "When I Left Arkansas," and "The Arkansaw Traveler," is more clearly set in the Ozarks. Often the traveler comes by railroad to Fort Smith or Van Buren, at other times to Hot Springs or Little Rock. This trip occurred in 1802, 1871, 1872, 1882, or 1889 and the traveler came upon a man who was not only memorable but typical of all men in this region: "Up stepped a walking skeleton with a long and lantern jaw."²³ In some versions he is not a skeleton but merely "a long tall gentleman," in others his exact height is given (it ranges from six feet to ten feet, seven inches), less commonly he is just a man who is "kind enough to give to me his paw."²⁴

This ballad, which is derived from a nineteenth century English sea song, "Canada I O," that in turn is probably based on an eighteenth century Scottish song, "Caledonia," spends far more time than the "Arkansas Traveler" describing the Ozarker's physical features. In addition to being lanky he often has a melancholy face which reveals poverty, misery, hunger and starvation, "hard luck an' starvation," or, most interesting, "military providence" (whatever that is). In addition to being tall and unbelievably thin, he is also terribly unkempt. His hair especially points out his lack of personal pride. It "hung down in strings over his long and lantern jaw" or it hung in "rat-tails" or "ringlets" or in "ringlets like Rats tails."²⁵ None of the frequent descriptions ever refer to the man's features being anything other than reprehensible; as far as looks go there is nothing admirable about him and his fellow Ozark residents.

Other undesirable aspects of Ozark life are depicted in the several versions of this song. Especially worthy of

comment is the diet of the hillfolk which seemingly consists of nothing more than corn dodger or corn hoecakes, tough meat, and sassafras tea. This not very well balanced fare is made worse by the fact that most of it is inedible. The corn dodgers are "as hard as any rock," so hard that after eating them "my teeth began to loosen and my knees began to knock." The meat was no better, being so tough that it was impossible to chew. While it was easy to get the tea into one's body it was of little value, most versions containing some statement like: "I got so thin on sassafras tea I could hide behind a straw." All this about what the several texts describe as the best food in the Ozarks and Arkansas; more typical meals must have been horrible to behold.²⁶

Not only is the Ozark diet bad, just about everything else about the land and its people is undesirable. The climate is terrible, causing poor health among all local citizens. Everyone succumbs to the "chill," one attack being so severe that the protagonist says: "I shook myself clean out of my boots."²⁷ There seem to be only two ways of curing this illness, the first suggested in a version of the ballad collected in northern Alabama in 1915 or 1916:

I staggered into a corner saloon and called for whiskey raw,
And I got drunk as a son-of-a-gun.²⁸

According to a version collected by John Lomax, it helps to get drunk before entering the Ozarks.²⁹ The alternative is simply to leave the region and most versions end with some statement to the effect that the narrator will never return to the area.

Bleak though the picture of Ozark natives depicted in "The State of Arkansas" is, they do have one virtue—their hospitable nature. Most versions speak of the men as being friendly. Usually the stranger is offered a hand and treated to the best available accommodations which, of course, are not very good. In only two versions is this trend broken and in both of these the narrator lands not in the Ozarks, but in Little Rock. Even here, in one version he finds one friendly, hospitable soul but he soon leaves for friendlier climes.³⁰

The portrait of Ozarkers found in "Arkansas Traveler" and "The State of Arkansaw" was reiterated in numerous other songs of a comic variety found throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many of them provide greater detail or add some new aspect to the stereotype. A ditty called "In Arkansas" dwells at some length on dietary and personal habits, noting that "the chickens they grow tall, an' their meat is full of gall/An' they eat 'em guts an' all" and "They chaw terbacker thin, an' it runs down on their chin/An' they wipe it off agin."³¹ A ballad titled "A Restless Night" reports that the Missouri Ozarks are far worse than the Arkansas side. The unnamed narrator travels to the Missouri section of the mountains when he is twenty years old. Spending a night at a tavern he finds the

meals "all right" even though they consist of only hoe-cake, hominy, and possum head. That, however, is the only thing that is acceptable. The beds are nothing more than sheepskins laid on the floor and the entire building is liberally supplied with lice and fleas "enough to torment any human at all." Indeed, he "scarcely could scratch as fast as they'd bit." In the final verse he comments:

Adieu to Missouri, I bid you farewell
I go back to Arkansas where I used to dwell;
Where the ladies were raring and tearing their hair,
For the loss of their lover when I left them there.³²

Despite the words of the hero of "A Restless Night" another song, originally called "Free Nigger" and dealing with North Carolina but later known, among other titles, as "The Arkansas Boys" or "The Arkansas Sheik," asserts that men from the Ozarks of Arkansas are poor marriage risks. Among their many problems are a lack of sensitivity, abject poverty, an inability to properly provide for their families, poor personal habits, and an improper diet. Their sole food is cornbread, poke salad, molasses, sassafras tea, and venison. A typical house is one with a clapboard roof, a puncheon floor, a batten door, a sandstone chimney, and minimal furniture. Those women unlucky enough to marry one of these men spent a lifetime "sleeping on the slats with a handful of straw/trying to get along with your mother-in-law." Even worse than their homes are the personal habits of these men. For example, it is stated that "The first thing he does whenever he goes in/He takes a chaw of tobacco and slobbers on his chin." Even when he has an occasion to take pride in his personal appearance he doesn't have the means to dress well:

When they go to meetin' the clothes they wear
Is an old brown coat all tore an' bare,
A old white hat without no crown,
An' old blue duckins the whole year 'round.³³

A gentler look at the Arkansas Ozarks appeared in a song titled "Eureka" that is a localization of an 1864 number, "Idaho." Talking about Eureka Springs, a north Arkansas town once famous as a health resort, the song dwells on the difficulty of travel in the region. Unfortunately, the people are also "wicked and rough," owing to which the narrator decides to leave. He departs even though the town's "crystal waters will cure any man whether sick or well." Another version of the same song provides more discussion of the town's inhabitants:

The people keep hounds down there,
And hunting is all they care,
The women they plow and hoe the cane,
While the men shoot turkey and deer.

The girls are healthy and stout,
Happy, modest and gay,
They card and spin from morn till night,
And dance from night until day.

The people are old-time folks,
Plain and honest and true,
Wear homespun dresses and copperas pants,
And coats of indigo blue.

They raise a tobacco patch,
The women they smoke and chaw,
Eat hog and hominy, poke for greens,
In the hills of Arkansas.³⁴

George "Honeyboy" Evans's 1913 song "Down in Arkansas," a hit also in 1921 when recorded by Pee Wee Myers and Ford Hanford, added a new dimension to the stereotype. Mostly a vehicle for puns (A girl named Oats married a man named Wheat, so the pianist played "What Shall the Harvest Be?") and ludicrous comic scenes (a girl is so crosseyed that when she cries, tears roll down her back), some versions also have these lines suggesting that Ozarkers are none too particular about legal niceties followed by civilized Americans. In fact, they are often ignorant of certain legalities:

When I was just a little lad,
My Ma got married to my Dad;
Grandpa got mad and cussed a while,
Grandma said "Hush, it's the latest style."³⁵

Most comic songs dealing with the Ozarks are primarily concerned with men; nineteenth century numbers virtually ignore women altogether. Women are more evident in twentieth century humorous songs, although the portrait given is not flattering. Len Nash's recording "The Ozark Trail" presents two typical Ozark women as found in comic songs. One is a flirt who simply can't resist dallying with a city feller and the other is a girl whose main virtue is fertility so great that the stork who brought the children she produced died from overwork:

On his tombstone this they wrote,
This poor bird was the family goat,
He brought kids till his back was broke.³⁶

Women in "The Ozark Trail" are mild compared to those in Cole Porter's 1936 song "The Ozarks Are Callin' Me Home." These women are promiscuous in the extreme, being ready to jump into bed with almost anyone who asks. Even "bashful sister Ann" makes "hay" with a traveling man and "sweet Aunt Sue" has two little half-wit bastards. Most of the women are not only morally loose but are also slovenly and given to nasty or unusual personal habits. For example, "tiny tongue-tied Baby Jane" shares a plug of tobacco with Grandpa. Some of Porter's Ozark females, like "dear Aunt Eliza" who reads Andy Gump and Cholly Knickerbocker, and Aunt Pansy who is "pink and plump" are not referred to in a derogatory manner, but most are characterized as being poor examples of femininity.³⁷

Twentieth century comic songs also introduced the gun-toting mountaineer who shoots first and asks questions

later. In "The Ozark Trail" Len Nash sings about "old Zeke an old galoot/About all he knew was how to shoot." Eventually Zeke demonstrates his skill on a city chap who "came without fail" so "Zeke shot him on the Ozark trail." While this particular image was perpetuated in some media, it was never especially strong in comic songs. Far more prevalent were some other negative images, notably a lack of educational aptitude. For example, "The Ozark Trail" begins by pointing out "away down yonder in the Ozark Mountains/Now folks ain't so good at books or countin'" and later adds "they're not good at spelling" although they are, at least, granted the ability to write. Other songs spell out the same points which were more subtly made in earlier compositions.

The mean-spirited, shiftless mountaineer who exists primarily for the purpose of abusing his wife makes a few appearances in popular or folk songs. He is most successfully displayed in Cole Porter's "The Ozarks Are Callin' Me Home" where the protagonist nostalgically yearns for scenes such as "Paw givin' Maw her daily lickin'." She even speaks approvingly of his habit of bringing the mule inside the house so it can stretch out on the floor. Grandfather is recalled as a man who does little more than sit around the house chewing tobacco while Uncle Ezra spends most of his time "sleepin' in the gutter." These are certainly not gentlemen that most people would look on fondly, or respect. They are, instead, the dregs of society that only the most fatuous would admire. This, of course, is the point, for humor is the purpose of such songs and they have to go to extremes to make certain that what is presumed funny appears so to anyone hearing the item.

Since 1936 there have been few comic songs dealing with the Ozarks; none that achieved any success. Undoubtedly part of the reason is that it has become increasingly harder to get away with this kind of material, audiences being much more touchy about ethnic slurs than formerly. Comic songs generally have declined and play an ever dwindling role in popular music, although they have not disappeared altogether. Those that have any lyrics that can be construed as slurs against any ethnic or cultural group have disappeared. Changing tastes, however, do not entirely explain the dearth of comic songs about the Ozarks since 1936. Perhaps after Cole Porter's "The Ozarks Are Callin' Me Home" there was simply nothing left to say. The stereotypes about slovenly, morally loose women, and shiftless, dim-witted men who inhabited that "green Missouri hill" were covered in such detail that little else could be added. Many of the other popularly held ideas about Ozark mountaineers had been treated in earlier songs. As a result, after 1939 lyricists had little to contribute in this regard.

While the comic song treatment of the Ozarks flourished throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the sentimental presentation came along much later.

There were occasional instrumental items such as T. Frank Allen's "Ozark Mountain Polka" of 1884 but no non-comic lyric pieces that achieved any success until 1893. Then, in that year, Henry DeMoss wrote "My Happy Little Home in Arkansas" and the sentimental musical portrait of the Ozarks was initiated. DeMoss's immediate impetus was the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago a year later than its originally planned date of 1892. DeMoss and his family introduced the song to Chicago audiences at "The Great American Fair" and it must have been fairly successful for it is still heard today, nearly a hundred years later.³⁸ While the song purports to be about Arkansas, the lyrics clearly situate the happy little home in the Ozark section of the state. DeMoss's lyrics paint a scene of bucolic paradise, with "streamlets from the Boston Mountains," woods that are alive with happy music, and where luscious, mellow, and sweet apples grow in abundance. Indeed, it is such a splendid region that it has "every kind of thing."³⁹

This concept of the Ozarks as Eden is restated in numerous songs throughout the following five decades. Fred Rose's "Ozark Blues" refers to the area as both heaven and home and contains these useful lines:

I was in heaven but I didn't know it,
When I left Missouri way,
And started on my way to stray,
I knew I'd get those Ozark blues.⁴⁰

Patsy Montana's "Where the Ozarks Kiss the Sky" refers to the mountain region as a "land beyond compare," one where the angels rested.⁴¹ Gene Autry and Jimmy Long's "Missouri Is Calling" speaks of it as "the land of all my dreams."⁴² Similar sentiments are found in several other songs.

Most lyricists find the Ozarks very appealing because the region is rural, and thus represents an alternative to the hectic life found in cities. In other words, the region is isolated from modern civilization but, unlike the comic song tradition, this is seen as a virtue. This view is most extensively stated in Jimmy Long and Gene Autry's "By the Ozark Trail":

When the cares of the day are ended,
Then my thoughts begin to roam,
Far beyond the busy city,
To a quaint old mountain home.

Back where the roses are blooming,
In the sunset's golden glow,
Back where a dear old mother's waiting,
That is where I long to roam.

I can hear the bluebirds a-singing,
In the trees among the hills,
I can hear the waters rushing,
By the quaint old water mill.

Tho' it has long since ceased its turning,
Weather beaten, worn and frail,
But tonight my heart again is yearning,
For that quaint old Ozark trail.⁴³

Log cabins frequently are used to underscore the image of a rural area removed from society's mainstream. In "The Foothills of the Ozarks" the narrator echoes the sentiments of many other nostalgic mountaineers of song when he remarks:

There's an old log cabin high on a hill
There my heart will always be lingering still.⁴⁴

The hero of "Blue-Eyed Sally" promises eternal bliss "in a rustic shack for two," while in "By the Ozark Trail" it will be achieved in "a dear old-fashioned cottage." For most songwriters, however, paradise is found in a log cabin. In George Edgin's "My Ozark Mountain Home" some variety is provided by identifying the home as both a "cabin" and a "shack." There is no doubt that it is located in a remote, rural setting for the narrator says it is "in them Ozark hills far away."⁴⁵

In several instances, rurality and isolation is noted by other imagery. "Way Down in Arkansaw" identifies the Ozarks as a place "where the jaybirds sweetly sing/In the winter just the same as spring" and refers to roosters crowing and new mown hay.⁴⁶ In "Ozark Mountain Lullaby" the mention of crops and chores suggests a pastoral setting while the same result is achieved in "When Flowers Bloom Again in the Ozarks" by references to beds of flowers, while "Ozark Mountain Rose" tells of "a sweet wild rose."⁴⁷ "Little Sweetheart of the Ozarks" replaces the violets and roses with pine trees while "Blue-Eyed Sally" includes, in addition to its reference to a rustic shack, prominent mention of gardens in the Spring.⁴⁸ Then, of course, numerous songs contain references to the Ozarks as quaint.

Lyricists of the sentimental tradition find many of the mountaineers' characteristics worthy of mention. Hospitality was an especially common trait if the evidence of these songs is to be believed. "Way Down in Arkansaw" (which doesn't seem to extend farther down than the Ozarks) labels the mountain region "that land of hospitality," and in 1893 the DeMoss Family suggested as much when they sang "I'll be there to greet you one and all." "Where the Ozarks Kiss the Sky" depicts a land "where the neighbors help each other,/where friends never pass you by." Some lyricists suggest that living in the Ozarks is conducive to love and peace, a view most recently offered in Robert Jones's "Ozark Mountain Lullaby" which was a minor success in 1976 for country singer Susan Raye:

The Lord smiles on a country home,
Where love and peace abide,
And while we children grow we learn to know,
That love is the tie that binds;

And some day when we're on our own,
With a family by and by,
We'll be singin' to our children
The Ozark Mountain Lullaby.⁴⁹

Sometimes love results merely from being in the Ozarks. This seems to be the message of Clayton McMichen's "Down On the Ozark Trail" and Al Trace's "Little Sweetheart of the Ozarks." In Hugh Cross's "When Flowers Bloom Again in the Ozarks," even Ozark flowers aid romance:

When the violets lift their heads,
From their cozy little beds,
They'll whisper dear that I've been true.⁵⁰

Whereas the comic songs have little to say about women, and generally relegate them to an insignificant role, Ozark women are the focus of most sentimental songs. At least some Ozark women are so honored, for it is only sweethearts and mothers who receive extensive mention. Not surprisingly, both are discussed in highly favorable terms, although their virtues are probably aided by the rosy recall of nostalgia. Sweethearts are always far away from their homesick lovers. Usually the pair have been separated for many years, necessitating scenes such as this in "Little Sweetheart of the Ozarks":

I sit alone reminiscing,
Dreaming of days long ago,
Wondering dear if you're missing,
The happiness we used to know.⁵¹

Often it is implied that the reason the duo is not together is that the girl represents the rural past the man once tried to escape. Sometimes, as in "Blue-Eyed Sally," the love struck and homesick young swain merely left to acquire necessary funds to get married:

Blue-eyed honey, I've saved money for a rainy day,
So in any weather, we can be together,
Now's the time make up your mind,
To war a weddin' ring.

In many songs, though, the reason for the separation is unstated. Typically, in these numbers the man yearns for his faraway love in words similar to these from "Ozark Mountain Rose":

I am always dreaming of her,
And my heart it overflows,
Dear ole moon please guide me homeward,
To my Ozark Mountain Rose.

While the songs offer several reasons for the sweethearts being apart, there is very little variation in descriptions of the girl's looks. She invariably has a fair complexion, frequently has blonde hair, blue eyes, and other features of Nordic beauty. Some songs, like "By the Ozarks Trail," merely depict her as a "country maiden fair," while others, such as "Blue-Eyed Sally," discuss

only the color of her eyes. Many others are more detailed. She has "golden curly hair" or "smiling eyes of blue" with "hair like golden sunbeams."⁵² Often these young girls are favorably compared to flowers, particularly roses. Thus, there is "Ozark Mountain Rose" and "Little Rose of the Ozarks," the latter of whom is also said to be an angel, presumably in the figurative sense. Most of these females have unending patience and loyalty, giving their lovers the same assurance possessed by the hero of "When Flowers Bloom Again in the Ozarks":

I know that she will wait,
Beside the garden gate,
Till I get back again.

Indeed, so virtuous and faithful are these young ladies that it is impossible to understand why anyone would ever willingly leave them.

Mother, the only other woman frequently mentioned in sentimental songs about the Ozarks, is markedly different from sweethearts in many respects. She is often "thin and frail" and, in some lyrics, sings and even fixes supper, activities that rarely occupy sweethearts. Indeed, the latter seem to spend most waking moments loitering around garden gates. Mothers generally live down remote lanes, preferably in a cottage or log cabin and, like sweethearts, wait perpetually. Often they are parted from their child because of some long ago crime or misdeed by the son, prompting some remark from the son such as this in "Missouri Is Calling":

Though mother dear I've caused you pain,
I'm coming back to you again,
And the quaint little home we loved so dear.

Sometimes mother is no longer living, necessitating a paean to her memory. The most successful of these is "My Ozark Mountain Home," although it is also distinctive for mentioning father who rarely appears in these songs. Mother is recalled as a woman who spent most of her time spouting adages and giving advice, often in somewhat ungrammatical form:

Oh, in words that live forever,
She advised me not to never take advantage,
Of the weak ones of our day.
Though we're better off than they,
We will all just be the same,
When we meet there in the shade of the clay.

This use of non-standard grammar also distances mothers from sweethearts; the latter usually do not speak, but when they do it is always in perfectly proper English. Men, however, do sometimes stray from the straight and narrow as, for example, in "Blue-Eyed Sally" where the protagonist uses the dialect words "we-uns" and "you-uns."

For some reason, dead sweethearts rarely occur in songs about the Ozarks, although they are certainly plentiful in

songs found in traditional Ozarks repertoires. Numbers such as "They Cut Down the Old Pine Tree," "Falling Leaf," "On the Banks of the Old Tennessee," and "Precious Jewel," which have been reported from a number of Ozark folksingers and which are derived from popular songs, provide strong evidence that Ozark singers do not avoid the subject of dead girl friends.⁵³ Nevertheless, no songs specifically set in the Ozarks have deceased young ladies as their major female figure. Generally the lasses described in these lyrics are in the mountains far away from their male lovers in the cities, so perhaps lyricists considered that fate the same as death.

For nearly a century and a half popular and folk songs have offered two persistent images of Ozark hillfolk. Although these depictions are in many regards dissimilar, in some respects they agree. Both emphasize the rural isolation of the area and the hospitality of its people; they are also alike in dealing only with poor people, or at least not upper class types. Where a residence is mentioned it is a modest one, a cabin, a shack, or a cottage, often a quaint one at that. In these songs no sweethearts, mothers, or yokels are found living in palatial quarters. Interestingly the comic portraits, which are now moribund, are reserved primarily for men while the sentimental tradition, which still continues, albeit at a slower pace than formerly, almost exclusively deals with women. The traditions paint entirely different pictures of males and females. Men, even if crude and poor, at least have the virtue of wittiness as exemplified most thoroughly in "The Arkansas Traveler." Women, on the other hand, never have that asset; they are instead patient, loyal, and, in the case of mothers, moralistic. Women, too, are less prone to talk than men, they are always better looking, and they never engage in wrongdoing.

One suspects that, to a great extent, lyricists did not think that only Ozark women possessed these traits. Instead, they were the virtues and features usually assigned to mothers and girl friends in songs intended for mass audiences. In other words, the women depicted in these sentimental numbers were stock types that could just as well have fitted into any American locale. The same point can not so easily be made for the men because part of the point of the humor was where these people were from. "The Ozarks Are Calling Me Home," for example, would probably have been less successful if it had been "The White Mountains Are Calling Me Home" or "The Adirondacks Are Calling Me Home," and it seems certain that "The Arkansas Traveler" would be less popular if it were "The Ohio Traveler," "The New Hampshire Traveler," "The Illinois Traveler," "The Midwestern Traveler," or some similar title. The reason these alternative locales would have less appeal is that they are less well fixed in popular and folk culture as places of ill or comic repute.

All stereotypes have an element of truth in them, albeit

the segment of fact is exaggerated to distortion. What is the element of truth in the stereotypes of Ozark mountaineers contained in popular and folk songs that have characterized them? According to some observers, even the most negative aspects of the stereotypes are accurate. For example, John Gunther's *Inside U.S.A.*, a book praised as excellent and intelligent by historians Henry Steele Commager and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., among others, includes this assessment: "The Ozarks are the Poor White Trash citadel of America. The people are undeveloped, suspicious, and inert. There are children aged fifteen who have never seen a toothbrush."⁵⁴ Most commentators on the region have been more moderate in their views. Yet, even some writers with a positive attitude toward the Ozarker suggest that negative assessments are not wholly erroneous. For example, Vance Randolph, who was enthralled with the Ozarks, once remarked that natives of the region were "until very recently, the most deliberately unprogressive people in the United States."⁵⁵ Admittedly, Randolph, unlike most others who have made the same charge, viewed this "backwardness" as an asset rather than a liability. Still, there are many who would deny the validity of Randolph's assessment.⁵⁶

Some elements of the stereotypes found in popular and folk songs are more universally agreed upon. The lyrics constantly stress that the Ozarks are rural and no authority disagrees. Indeed, one recent writer suggests this is "perhaps the most important cultural fact relating to the Ozarks."⁵⁷ There is also some validity to the notion, which is indicated in many songs, that the Ozarks are isolated, but at no time were the region and its residents totally cut off from the outside world. In other words, the isolation was only relative in comparison with some non-rural region. Most writers who have commented on the matter note that Ozarkers are hospitable, but whether they are more or less hospitable than people in other parts of America is again a relative determination. Indeed, most of the traits songwriters assigned to Ozark hillfolk apply to some mountaineers but hardly to all or even a majority. Like all regions, the Ozarks have people who are dim-witted, slovenly, poverty stricken, who use grammatically incorrect English, and are quaint. Nevertheless, such people are often thought to be typical Ozark residents and popular and folk songs share some of the blame for perpetuating these stereotypes. They have been aided, of course, by other popular productions such as the Ma and Pa Kettle films, the Snuffy Smith comic strip, and the "Beverly Hillbillies" television program.

In defense of the songwriters, it can be noted that they never intended their lyrics as documentary works, but merely as entertainment. Therefore, they were not bound to present an accurate picture of the Ozarks; their only goal was to appeal to their audiences. Given this aim, it is hardly surprising that they relied heavily on pre-existing

stereotypes to give their songs appeal. It seems unlikely that many of the lyricists harbored any malice towards the Ozarks, and some of them may have even regarded the stereotypes they helped promulgate in a positive light. Certainly, some of the traits given to Ozarkers in songs would be considered assets by most people, one example being the characterization of the region as an area noted for its hospitality. Finally, much of the description of the Ozarks found in these songs is merely a reflection of a long standing American view of rural areas. Throughout the history of the United States, literary figures and thinkers have typically regarded the city as an object of prejudice, fear, and distrust while the countryside has often been the exact opposite.⁵⁸ Not unexpectedly, then, writers of sentimental songs have also usually viewed country environs in idyllic ways. Generally, when the lyrics of popular and folk songs deal with rural areas, they refer to the South, more commonly the mountainous regions. As a result, in popular and folk songs the Ozarks often are merely synonymous with rural America. This situation provides another reason to rely on stereotype and to lessen the chance for an accurate picture of mountain life. For many people, the images conveyed in the songs provided the only contact they had with mountaineers and so, whether accurate or not, such images were accepted as realistic and correct by a large segment of the American population.

This paper was originally read at a conference on Ozark culture, held 21 October 1987 in Springfield, Missouri. I wish to express my thanks to Ellen Garrison, archivist at the Center for Popular Music, for her assistance in locating several Ozark songs.

Notes

1. The most generous definition of the boundaries of the Ozarks includes portions of Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma, while the most narrow includes only most of northern Arkansas and southern Missouri. For a recent definition of the boundaries of the region see Milton D. Rafferty, *The Ozarks: Land and Life* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 3.

2. See Homer C. Hockett, *Introduction to Research in American History* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 90; idem, *The Critical Method in Historical Research and Writing* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 5; and Allen Johnson, *The Historian and Historical Evidence* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 5.

3. See Henry P. Shapiro, *Appalachia On Our Mind* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978).

4. The song "Down in Arkansaw" is an example.

5. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *A View of the Lead Mines of Missouri* (1821).

6. This edition was published in Louisville and Cincinnati.

7. For more about Faulkner's claim see James R. Masterson, *Arkansas Folklore* (Little Rock: Rose Publishing Co., 1974; reprint of *Tall Tales of Arkansaw*, Boston: Chapman & Grimes, 1943), 225-227.

8. See Catherine Marshall Vineyard, "The Arkansas Traveler," in Mody C. Boatright and Donald Day, eds., *Backwoods to Border* (Austin: Texas Folklore Society and University Press in Dallas, 1943), 11-60.

9. Spencer's version appears on Norm Cohen, ed., *Minstrels and Tunesmiths: The Commercial Roots of Early Country Music Illustrated with Early Recordings from 1902-1923*, LP and accompanying brochure notes (John Edwards Memorial Foundation, JEMF-109, 1981).

10. Masterson, 226.

11. Grub Hyson is a tea brewed from sassafras roots.

12. Masterson, 187-189.

13. For the complete text see Masterson, 189-191.

14. For the complete text of the Wilson version see Masterson, 198-201.

15. In the brochure notes to *Minstrels and Tunesmiths* Norm Cohen gives the Spencer text.

16. Masterson refers to, but does not print, the Stevens-Pierpont version on 202-203.

17. The complete text of the Harmon version is given in Masterson, 217-218.

18. See Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980; reprint and revision of a work originally issued 1946-1950), III, 22-25.

19. Ray B. Browne, *The Alabama Folk Lyric: A Study in Origins and Media of Dissemination* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1979), 352-353.

20. Leonard Roberts, *Sang Branch Settlers: Folksongs and Tales of a Kentucky Mountain Family* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), 183-184.

21. "Still Trying to Get to Little Rock," recorded 22 September 1961 (King 5629, 45 rpm; King K-791, *Folk Song Festival*, and King K-1046, *How Far to Little Rock*, LPs).

22. Masterson, 189.

23. John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, *Cowboy Songs and Other*

Frontier Ballads (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938; revision and enlargement of a work originally published in 1910), 284.

24. From a collection by Newman Ivey White quoted in Masterson, 258; Harry Lee Williams, *History of Craighead County, Arkansas* (Little Rock: Parke-Harper Co., 1930), 337.

25. Most versions of the song have this line or something very similar.

26. See the preceding note.

27. From a manuscript collection by Newman Ivey White quoted in Masterson, p. 259. Many versions of the song have a similar line.

28. Masterson, 259.

29. Lomax and Lomax, 284, has this set of lyrics:

I bought me a quart of whisky my misery to thaw,
I got as drunk as a biled owl when I left for old Arkansas.

30. This version was printed as "The Arkansaw Navvy" in M.C. Dean, *Flying Cloud and One Hundred and Fifty Other Old Time Songs and Ballads of Outdoor Men, Sailors, Lumber Jacks, Soldiers, Men of the Great Lakes, Railroadmen, Miners, etc.* (Virginia, Minnesota: The Quickprint, 1922), 8-9.

31. Randolph, III, 18.

32. Roger D. Abrahams, *A Singer and Her Songs: Almeda Riddle's Book of Ballads* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 85-87. Another version of the same song, with the title "Benton County, Arkansas," is given in Randolph, III, 19-20.

33. Clayton McMichen and Riley Puckett, "The Arkansas Sheik," recorded in Atlanta, Georgia, 26 October 1928 (Columbia 15686-D, 78 rpm). The vocal is by Puckett. [In the remainder of this essay a song previously footnoted is not footnoted again when it is quoted for the second or third time.]

34. Randolph, III, 16. The original song, "Idaho," was written by Frank French.

35. Leo Rainey, *Songs of the Ozark Folk* (Branson, Missouri: The Ozarks Mountaineer, 1981), 16.

36. Len Nash, "The Ozark Trail" (Brunswick 387, 78 rpm).

37. Cole Porter, "The Ozarks Are Callin' Me Home." In December, 1936 this number was inserted into the musical *Red, Hot and Blue* where it was performed by Ethel Merman. It replaced the song "You're a Bad Influence on Me" which was in the original October, 1936 version of the musical but was dropped soon after the New York opening. Andrew "Andy" Gump was the paterfamilias of *The Gumps*, the chief character in Sidney Smith's comic strip which ran 1917-1935. It was the most famed and widely read comic strip of the 1920s and Smith was the F. Scott Fitzgerald of the common newspaper reader. Thus, saying that "Aunt Eliza" read this strip would have been considered something of a compliment because it meant she had a certain degree of intelligence.

38. The epithet "The Great American Fair" comes from the title of R. Reid Badger's volume, *The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition and American Culture* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, Inc., 1979). A brief article on the DeMoss Family, including a photograph, appears in Mary D. Hudgins, "A Musical Note on an Old Arkansas Song," *Arkansas Gazette*, 25(September, 1966).

39. Randolph, IV, 392.

40. Fred Rose, "Ozark Blues" (Sherman, Clay & Co., 1923), 2-3.

41. Patsy Montana and Bob Miller "Where the Ozarks Kiss the Sky" (Bob Miller, Inc., 1936).

42. Long Brothers, "Missouri Is Calling" (Victor 23637, 78 rpm). Although billed as brothers, Autry and Long were not so related. Long was the uncle of Autry's wife.

43. Jimmy Long and Gene Autry, "By the Ozark Trail."

44. Herbert R. Cushman, lyrics, Lee Brown, music, "The Foothills of the Ozarks," in *Stuart Hamblen and His Lucky Stars* (Chicago: M.M. Cole Publishing Co., 1942), 7. This book is a collection of some of Hamblen's more successful songs.

45. A recent recording of Edgin's 1932 song appears on *All in the Family: The Williams Family of Roland, Arkansas* (Arkansas Traditions 004).

46. James White, "Way Down in Arkansasaw."

47. The song is by Bonnie Dodd and was written in 1936 and recorded in March, 1937 by Dodd and Murray Lucas for the American Record Company.

48. Al Bernard and Russel Robinson, "Blue-Eyed Sally" (Henry Waterson, Inc., 1924), 4.

49. Robert John Jones, "Ozark Mountain Lullaby" (Blue Book Music, 1976).

50. Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Cross, "When Flowers Bloom Again in the Ozarks" (Columbia 15504, 78 rpm).

51. Prairie Ramblers, "Little Sweetheart of the Ozarks" (Vocalion 04023, 78 rpm). The song was written by Al Trace.

52. See, for example, "When Flowers Bloom Again in the Ozarks" and "Little Sweetheart of the Ozarks."

53. See, for example, various collections, the most notable of which are Randolph, and Diane Dugaw, *Ozark Folksongs*, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Colorado, 1973.

54. John Gunther, *Inside U.S.A.* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), 342.

55. Vance Randolph, *Ozark Magic and Folklore* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1964; reprint of *Ozark Superstitions*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 3.

56. See, for example, Robert K. Gilmore, *Ozark Baptizings, Hangings, and Other Diversions: Theatrical Folkways of Rural Missouri, 1885-1910* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 6.

57. Milton D. Rafferty, *The Ozarks: Land and Life* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 4.

58. For an excellent treatment of this theme see Morton and Lucia White, *The Intellectual Versus the City: From Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

Graphics #67: The Visual Arkansas Traveler

Archie Green

For more than a century, a wayfarer in Arkansas has amused fellow citizens as they have encountered him variously within square-dance tune, comic skit, stage recital, printed broadside, popular lithograph, phonograph disc, and advertising logo. As our hero has moved about from tent show to sound studio and from artist's loft to museum's vault, he has also carried a narrative burden—the interaction between an urbane sophisticate and an uncouth squatter. The encounter continues to hold power in that it comments, metaphorically, upon national polarities. In this sense, *The Arkansas Traveler*, in all his guises, thrives from Alaska to Florida as well as from Little Rock to Washington, DC.

We divide ourselves in the United States by political creed, economic condition, region, race, age, gender, religion, occupation, ethnicity, and language. Hence, each cultural construct (of press, microphone, or camera) helps identify tensions stemming from American differences, local and central, personal, and institutional. At times, cultural material—for example, a graphic cartoon or topical ballad—serves directly to mark social opposition. At times, these same artistic works facilitate mediation between groups and causes. Among its diverse uses, *The Arkansas Traveler* points both to wounds in the body politic and to needed balm.

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence rejected the categorizing duality of king/subject and prince/pauper. Subscribing to egalitarian creeds, Americans quickly turned the mocking song “Yankee Doodle” into a proud symbol of new nationhood. In the decades of Jefferson and Jackson, “Yankee Doodle” shared the stage with many cousins—some posing as dandies with lorgnettes, others as backwoodsmen with long rifles. No one knows precisely when a Yankee moving West was transformed into a traveler of fiddle-tune and comic-dialogue fame. However, before 1850, citizens from Maine to Mississippi could associate a particular melody and colloquial text with the formal title, “*The Arkansas Traveler*,” and take pleasure in humorous turnabout enacted by a city/country pair.

I assume that most readers of the *JEMF Quarterly* have heard some recording of “*The Arkansas Traveler*.” Neither a tune nor text standing alone, it can best be tagged a “cante-fable,” a tale in which the musical strain is crucial to plot resolution. A brief summary will refresh memories: while the prying outsider asks the taciturn insider a series of stock questions, the latter evades answers or inverts them with word play. Between questions, the squatter fiddles a tune's first part. The patter itself turns

when the traveler asks the fiddler why he does not end the tune. The latter responds that he doesn't know the second part. Conveniently, the stranger accepts the instrument and completes the melody. Music dissolves animosity; the rustic invites the wayfarer into the humble cabin to share frontier hospitality.

Despite lively curiosity and considerable research, no one has traced the exact origin of “*The Arkansas Traveler*” to a single composer, author, or performer. Although many of the jests which are featured in the dialogue had circulated long before any settlers reached Arkansas, we do not know what circumstances jelled and named this particular verbal/musical cluster. Hard evidence, gathered by several scholars follows. During 1847, in sheet music arranged by William Cumming, a traditional tune called “*The Arkansas Traveler*” first reached print. Under this same title, word-play questions and answers linked in a dialogue reached print by 1859. During 1896, Henry C. Mercer wrote the first scholarly article on this subject for *Century Magazine* and indicated that many residents of Arkansas had come to dislike the skit's pejorative overtones. Such feelings complicated the task of delving into the traveler's bag of meanings.

A few years after Mercer's article, an unnamed performer—most likely, Len Spencer—first recorded “*The Arkansas Traveler*” for Columbia. Cylinders and discs followed for the Edison and Victor labels. An early catalog statement read: “Descriptive of a native sitting in front of his hut scraping his fiddle and answering the interruptions of the stranger with witty sallies. Record is full of jokes and laughter.” Fortunately, Norm Cohen included a Spencer variant from 1908 on *Minstrels & Tunesmiths*, a reissue LP (JEMF 109).

Students of American literature may be amused to know that in 1926 Fred Allsopp cast the story into a long parody based on Longfellow's “*Hiawatha*.” Allsopp opened:

Years ago, a stranger, weary,
Chanced upon a mountain hovel,
In a region bare and dreary,
Under circumstances novel.
There a squatter twanged a fiddle.
Seated on a whiskey-barrel.
Clearly, he a human riddle,
With the tendency to quarrel.

I leave to readers the discovery of hundreds of other forms, extended or minute. Here, I shall not recapitulate the entire colloquy, nor cite numerous melodic appearances in songbook and anthology. Rather, I focus upon a

few representations in art. We lack a checklist of all visual depictions accompanying this musical dialogue. Such a list would advance knowledge about American iconography.

Edward Payson Washburn (also spelled Washbourne) heads the list of delineators, for he first placed a narrative about a squatter and a stranger within the frame of a genre oil painting. Born in 1831, at his father's Congregational mission among the Oklahoma Cherokees, Edward showed early artistic gifts. When he was nine, his parents returned to Arkansas. A decade later, he journeyed to New York for formal art instruction. At home in 1855, Washburn established himself as a portrait painter. We do not know precisely when he undertook to paint a cante-fable, then-popular in his community, although he planned to visit New York in the summer of 1856 to seek an engraver for *The Arkansas Traveller*. Perhaps this trip was delayed, or the canvas not yet complete, or the transaction not consummated with a Manhattan firm. Three years later, Boston lithographer Leopold Grozelier did transfer Washburn's art to stone, from which J.H. Bufford & Company produced and sold finished prints.

I do not know whether Washburn actually carried to Boston his painting, or a small drawing derived from it, or whether he mailed a sketch to the Buffords. Regardless, Grozelier completed the task, and the *Fayetteville Arkansian* (16 September 1859) announced that the painting had been lithographed in Boston and would be available for sale in Arkansas in November. Next, Washburn deposited a copy with the Arkansas eastern district clerk of the United States Court, who certified it on 3 December 1859. In that period, each district clerk handled copyright assignments within his territorial jurisdiction. With the transfer of these matters to the Library of Congress in 1885, Washburn's registration copy reached Washington.

I reproduce the Library of Congress black-and-white lithograph [item #3] and note that the prints subsequently sold by the Bufford firm were hand-tinted. These merit attention in that they served to spread Washburn's visual treatment throughout the land. Before 1860, few people saw the artist's canvas; millions saw the Boston prints directly, or in a never ending stream of imitations and derivations.

At this juncture, I note that the history of Washburn's canvas is still obscure or contradictory. James Masterson (p.228) suggested that the artist had finished this influential painting in 1858 at Norristown (Old Dwight) near Russellville. The *Fayetteville Arkansian* (23 July 1859) noted that Washburn "had recently finished a painting" of the notorious traveler. George Lankford (p. 18) moved this date back to July, 1856, and noted two Washburn "originals." Lankford reported that Washburn carried his first oil painting to New York. While there, he painted a second copy as a gift for his parents. In time, the first painting was lost. The second, damaged by water and

creases, was eventually donated to the Arkansas History Commission, where it was restored and is currently displayed [item #2].

Here, I shall not summarize all conflicting accounts of the original painting(s). As early as 1892, George Dodge wrote to Henry Mercer "correcting" the latter's findings on "The Arkansas Traveler." Dodge's authority stemmed from childhood when he had posed for Washburn as the boy in the ash barrel. Over the years other critics have raised questions about the proper number of children at the cabin door, or the appearance in Grozelier's engraving of a fine setter rather than a frontier hound. (Washburn's canvas showed no dog.) Apart from such internal elements, students have returned to the matter of Washburn's two "original" paintings. When and where did he complete them? Did they differ substantially? Can the lost one be described?

One seminal source for Washburn's work had been asserted by Zella Hargrove Gaither; it seems not to have been reported elsewhere. In 1924, she searched for "true facts" among oldtimers who had retained memories of the first painting. She noted (in Lemke, 1955) that, between 1848 and 1856, John Wesley Woodward, a deaf mute, had created a pencil sketch of squatter and traveler "embodied in that Dialogue." Woodward, serving as a deputy to the Johnson County Clerk at Clarksville, placed the drawing on his wall. Somehow attorney Sol F. Clark removed the sketch to his own office at Fort Smith. There, about 1856, he rented a studio room to Washburn. When the young artist saw Woodward's drawing he expanded upon it in an oil painting. After Clark read Mercer's *Century* article (1895), he, too, wrote to the magazine, correcting "the mistake of [the picture's] authorship."

Can this Gaither account be corroborated? To what extent does it mix empirical fact and local anecdote? Its importance goes beyond assigning credit to Woodward. Essentially, Mrs. Gaither reminds us that, possibly, as early as the 1840s, an Arkansawyer made the imaginative leap from fiddle tune/comic dialogue to visual art. This creative act, itself, led to reminiscences about painting and engraving. Ultimately, such lore, touching art, reinforced the appeal held within an American cante-fable.

Not only do we still lack keys to Washburn's art, but the Grozelier lithograph carries its own mysteries. No one seems to have located files on *The Arkansas Traveller* left by Boston's Bufford firm. We ask: did Grozelier work directly from the original painting (Norristown), the copy (New York), or neither. Washburn could have supplied the firm with a pencil drawing or sketch rather than his canvas.

We can assert with certainty that the lithographs were well received "back home," for the *Searcy Eagle* editor, upon receipt of a print, lauded the artist:

Mr. Washburn has shown in this painting that high order of talent as a historical painter will soon place him in the first rank of his profession. Arkansas should be proud of him; and show that interest in his efforts which the young and adventurous artist knows well how to appreciate... (24 December 1859).

Sadly, the artist died on 26 March 1860, before his painting or the derivative prints brought him fame or fortune. His meager estate held the oil painting (either the original or the copy), a few unsold Boston prints, and an unfinished canvas, *The Turn of the Tune*—intended as a sequel to *The Arkansas Traveller*.

Washburn's early painting, as well as Leopold Grozelier's engraving of it, focused attention on the polarity built into a then-traditional verbal/musical colloquy. The artist showed a well-dressed stranger mounted on a splendid white horse. This traveler confronted a seated fiddler wearing a coonskin cap—an unparalleled frontier symbol. Not only did one figure tower over the other, but dress heightened their difference. A woman and children flanked the fiddler. The painter, of course, used this family to reinforce notions of backwoods fertility.

Today, we view the Boston lithograph as considerably more polished than Washburn's painting. Grozelier displayed his own artistic talent by careful attention to supporting details: a boy sits on a lye-making ash-hopper, gourd bird-houses decorate a bare tree, a racoon skin dries on the cabin wall, A cabin-door sign spells "WHI 2KY." The door sign's inverted letter can be dismissed as obvious humor—a mark of rural ignorance. As well, this inversion serves as a key to the dialogue's large meaning—Americans had to turn divine rights inside out and upside down to achieve democratic rights. In this sense, Washburn reached back to Bunker Hill and King's Mountain. Backwoodsmen did turn around the redcoats' cosmos, but the rebels could not freeze issues for posterity. We remain ambivalent, today, as we witness strange inversions of democratic values, and ponder governmental support of tyranny in the name of freedom.

Purchasers of *The Arkansas Traveller* prints in the 1860s already knew its narrative kernel: the squatter had bested the squire in word play, but the squire held the tune's secret. Neither figure achieved full victory over the other; both shared power. Essentially, the combined tune/dialogue/illustration served as metaphor for constant mediation between patrician and plebeian, aristocrat and commoner. Hence, I read Washburn's cabin door "2" as a mark of tension within the American polity, and our striving for resolution of difference.

Washburn, dying before his career flowered, has not been seen as a significant painter by art historians. Knowledge of him has come mainly from local historians and folklorists. I have drawn upon their research and named them, with thanks, in an appended bibliography. Like others, I have wished to learn something of Washburn's

motivation in reaching into oral tradition to illustrate a stereotypical encounter. Did the fiddle-tune-linked-to-a-comic-dialogue strike the artist as holding special conceptual power? Had he actually observed such a happening? Did he know either the wayfarer or the native? Did he assume that prints made from his painting might sell well in the market place? We ask these rhetorical questions, not so much to search for "truths," but rather to resolve personal and philosophical matters of identity.

Fortunately, the Grozelier engraving moved beyond the painting by providing some leads for the curious. Each print carried a line of music and a dedication to Col. S.C. Faulkner. In the 1850s, many Arkansas residents had credited Sanford Faulkner (1803-1874) as the "original personator" of the traveler. However, current scholarship indicates that a number of musicians and storytellers, unknown to each other, contributed elements to the evolving sketch. "Colonel Sandy"—planter, politician, soldier, *bon vivant*—had gained renown for his tongue-in-cheek renditions of the dialogue and fiddle tune. Hence, the artist may either have observed Faulkner performing, or simply have accepted an ascription of authorship then widespread in Arkansas.

About the time that Washburn completed his transaction with the Bufford firm in Boston, he arranged for a local printer, probably in Little Rock, to issue a small broadside text of the traveler's dialogue. This sheet is extremely rare; I have never seen it reproduced in a book or magazine. Masterson (p. 358) identified the broadside as an uncopyrighted document, without date or place of publication, and without a printer's name. Masterson reported further that the Boston lithograph (including its line of music) and the broadside (Faulkner) dialogue could be purchased together. Harry Peters (p. 121) included a full text which may date back to this "first" broadside.

To the best of my knowledge, although many students of "The Arkansas Traveler" have reproduced the Grozelier print, with its dedication to Faulkner, no one, heretofore, has reproduced the Library of Congress copy bearing the registration date of 3 December 1859. I stress this date's importance, as it forces us to speculate on the time span between the completion of Washburn's genre painting and the transaction with the Bufford firm in Boston. John H. Bufford headed a major lithographic establishment from 1841 until after 1880. His various addresses, listed by Peters (p. 118), can be used by collectors to date the numerous editions of *The Arkansas Traveller*.

During the 1870s, Currier & Ives, in New York, issued a pair of lithographs which drove the earlier Boston prints off the market. (Apparently, the last Grozelier-Bufford offering appeared in 1880.) The Currier & Ives prints, rendered by lithographer John Cameron, bore elaborate titles: *The Arkansas Traveller: Scene in the Back Woods of*

Arkansas and *The Turn of the Tune: Traveller Playing "The Arkansas Traveller."* Under these titles, each print carried several lines of text summarizing the traveler/squatter dialogue. Both Currier & Ives works are reproduced [Items #7 and #8] from black and white copyright entries in the Library of Congress.

Cameron's first lithograph derived directly from Washburn's painting as engraved by Grozelier. Cameron's second lithograph, completing the tale, carried out Washburn's plan for a sequel to his first painting. A few orthographic details in the Currier & Ives prints continue to hold the attention. In 1870, Cameron spelled "WHISKY" on the cabin sign with a proper "S." To compensate for this "correction," in 1875, Currier & Ives altered the captions for Cameron's pair, changing *Arkansas Traveller* to *Arkansaw Traveler*.

Residents of Arkansas have long debated the correct spelling and pronunciation of their state's name. Some viewers of the Cameron prints, in 1875, felt the "saw" in *Arkansaw* to be a slur against the good people in Arkansas. Can we assume that someone in the Currier & Ives office made a conscious decision to play up one of the messages conveyed within Cameron's depictions? (Readers who wish to compare the Currier & Ives prints of 1870—reproduced here—to those of 1875 can find the latter two in Mercer's *Century* article.)

Collectors of Americana have long noted the great popularity of Currier & Ives prints. Many have become valued keepsakes, hung alike on parlor or tavern wall. Cameron's pair were themselves widely reproduced and imitated. We now see a direct visual line from Washburn to Grozelier to Cameron, and far beyond into crude woodcut, sheet music cover, pocket songster, stereopticon slide, postcard, calendar, commercial logo, and other ephemera. Most of these latter forms fit the rubric, "popular art," but they do not cover the entire field.

Artists trained in the academy, or with high aspirations, also copied Washburn. During 1876, Governor Augustus Garland arranged for Arkansas to be well represented at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. He secured funds for a building holding exhibits of cotton, lumber, and minerals. An elegant oil painting, *The Arkansas Traveler*, graced the economic produce. James M. Fortenbury painted this copy in Little Rock and shipped it, unframed, to the east. Meanwhile, the artist sold photographs of the painting to raise funds for a heavy gold frame, secured in Philadelphia. Newspapers of the day carried an amusing account about a piano in the Centennial's Arkansas Building. Visitors, from all walks of life, frequently sat down at the convenient piano and regaled the assembly with the familiar tune.

During 1976, the Smithsonian Institution mounted a Bicentennial Exhibition modeled after the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876. Within the Arkansas unit, Smithson-

ian curators displayed Fortenbury's colorful easel painting [item #9]. Although it is a "copy," it goes beyond Washburn in several details. Washburn had shown a bare tree—really, a dead sapling; Fortenbury showed two trees in full leaf, and deleted the cabin-door whiskey sign. Of all of the works derived from Washburn, the Centennial painting is most bucolic. Fortunately, some years after 1876, this work was purchased by Fred Allsopp, who donated it to the Museum of Science & History at Little Rock.

Allsopp's name runs through much research on the *Arkansas Traveler*, for he served his state well as poet, painter, and publisher. Sometime after 1895, he issued a broadside, "The Arkansaw Traveler and the Turn of the Tune." This large sheet held a woodcut derived from Currier & Ives. Eight bars of music and a full dialogue text ran below the cut. Masterson (p.371) reported that "at least a thousand copies were sold [each] for a low price." Here, I reproduce this broadside's woodcut [item #10] and note that its citation to William F. Pope's *Early Days in Arkansas* (pp. 325—330) refers only to the dialogue and not to the picture. Today, we view Allsopp's turn-of-the-century cut as representative of considerable popular illustration, locally produced and inexpensively distributed.

Not all artists have been content to stay close to Washburn's depiction. Some have offered fresh interpretations for the traditional subject. During the New Deal era, publishers issued many books to popularize regional and vernacular concerns. The excellent series, "Rivers of America," brought together the talents of Stephen Vincent Benet, Carl Carmer, and Constance Lindsay Skinner. In 1940, Farrar & Rinehart commissioned Clyde Brion Davis to write about the Arkansas River, and Donald McKay to illustrate the volume. McKay, born in 1895 in San Francisco, studied at the Mark Hopkins School of Art. After service in the artillery in World War I, he worked until his death as an illustrator of children's books. From *The Arkansas*, I reproduce his fine ink drawing of a top-hatted traveler and an exuberant native [item #11]. McKay deserves high marks for his unhackneyed look at an oft-told tale.

Washburn's conception of *The Arkansas Traveler* continues to reside in archive vault as well as upon museum wall, and his imagery lives, also, wherever tourists buy Arkansas postcards and memorabilia. George Lankford has noted, wisely, that his state's icon was immensely popular more than a century ago, but that it fell into disfavor for its "low" associations, only to be revived in recent decades as part of tourism's appropriation of folk themes.

During 1968, residents at Hardy, Arkansas, first staged an Ozark summer drama, billing it as *The Arkansaw Traveller Folk Theatre*. Local actors, of course, used Washburn's painting as source for props and costumes. Leo Rainey, the "folk-drama's" creator continues to this day

to direct the production. A native of the region, he worked for the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service for twenty-nine years. Rainey's enterprise brings together the flavor of craft guilds, folk festivals, and outdoor epic dramas. Visitors are treated to mountain music and cuisine; "mountain" is best understood broadly to include a range from old time through bluegrass music, and ham to hominy fare.

The Hardy troupe has issued a wide variety of graphics: souvenir program booklets, travel brochures, posters, postcards, table place-mats, mail-order forms. I select but two [item #12 and #13] to display contemporary extensions of Washburn's original painting. The first is the inside page of a 1974 threefold brochure, holding six photographs. The largest cut shows the outdoor stage with cabin as background for stranger and squatter. The second is the inside back cover of a 1986 souvenir program advertising "Natural Foods from the Ozarks." Interestingly, this ad displays a Visa and MasterCard logo balancing a logo of a fiddling squire mounted on a white horse.

Before closing the commentary, I shall loop back to mention an early pictorial not widely imitated. The first sheet music printing of which we have knowledge is an arrangement by William Cumming of "The Arkansas Traveller" coupled with "Rackinsac Waltz." W. C. Peters of Peters & Field, Cincinnati, and of Peters & Webster, Louisville, secured a copyright for these two tunes in 1847. This sheet [item #1] holds no text and no illustration. Subsequently, in 1851, Firth, Pond & Co., a New York firm, also issued an instrumental sheet music version by William Iucho without a cover illustration. Other music printings followed.

Between 1858 and 1863, publishers Blodgett & Bradford in Buffalo issued a sheet music version of "The Arkansas Traveler" by Mose Case linking text and tune. This was the first sheet music printing of this piece, of which we have knowledge, to hold a crude cover drawing. After 1863, J.R. Blodgett (either John R. or J. Randolph) took over the firm, keeping the Case music in print. I assume that the two Case covers issued in Buffalo were identical. The name of J.R. Blodgett's artist or engraver has eluded commentators; however, his cover merits attention if only by contrast with the Grozelier lithograph. The Blodgett cover [item #4] reveals a rather substantial double-cabin with a well-dressed man in top hat and long-tailed coat (fiddler) and woman in doorway. A nondescript observer/outsider holding a cane stands passively beyond a rickrack fence.

In Boston, perhaps as early as 1863, Oliver Ditson also issued sheet music for Mose Case's variant [item #5]. Artist H.F. Greene, elaborating on the previous Blodgett-Case cover, sharpened its thrust. Richard Jackson (p. 262) has suggested that Ditson's talented artist sought to craft a "primitive" log cabin (with a leaky roof), rickrack fence,

and rough lumber border design for the Case offering. In his attention to rusticity, Greene dwarfed his stranger and squatter in relation to the cabin.

Today, we ask: did Greene see the Grozelier/Buford lithograph and try deliberately for a different design, or did Greene (in 1863) base his cover assignment on the Buffalo predecessor or upon a picture which preceded Washburn's? This question leads back to the problem of who first turned the fiddle/dialogue into visual art. Until someone dates firmly a picture or print before 1859, we must credit and honor Edward Payson Washburn for his original treatment.

I have contrasted Washburn's delineation on canvas with that of Greene's drawing, in part, to alert readers to the possible existence of very early illustrations for our traveler. Also, I have called attention to Zella Gaither's claim on behalf of John Wesley Woodward's sketch. However, the matter of artistic conceptualization rides ahead of that of chronology. Greene saw a log cabin; Washburn saw the interplay of signifying characters. Clearly, the former, by intent or accident, achieved a feeling of both rurality and antiquity, for, by 1863, a log cabin with a leaky roof had come to mark the past as unprogressive. Greene failed, or did not wish, to go beyond the fiddler's rustic setting. This artist did not, as Washburn did, capture the cante-fable's essential meaning—American polarity and its resolution.

One could write another full essay on the wide range in our Traveler's portraits—those departing from the narrative's central message. But one example serves to make the point: during 1864, New York publishers Dick & Fitzgerald issued a widely circulated *Arkansas Traveler Song Book* [item #6]. Mary Hudgins (p. 150) has noted that the unlikely pair gracing this booklet's cover resembled a Civil War Union officer and a gypsy fiddler. Today, it is difficult to decipher the artist's intent in these costumes. Perhaps by the Civil War's end, the cante-fable's essence was so familiar that any horseman watching a fiddler would speak to a large public. As we compare the song book's cover with the Washburn painting, the former seems off the mark. Yet, this matter of fidelity to a particular artistic theme may not have seemed important to publishers in 1864.

The traditional verbal patter, and its underlying conflict, which came together in the earliest depictions of the Arkansas Traveler, echoed politics current in the Age of Jackson. Washburn's painting, in the form of Leopold Grozelier's prints, circulated during Lincoln's White House years. I write these comments as Ronald Reagan's second presidential term winds to a close, marred by errors in policy and misreadings in public support. Accordingly, I am aware that squire and squatter still contend for American turf. In some years, one dominates; in other years, both balance energies.

Readers of the *JEMF Quarterly*, who have heard the Arkansas Traveler performed or seen it pictured, will bring their own views to text, tune, and visual form. I urge other students of vernacular culture to take up the trail of traveler and native—to seek contemporary turns of the tune. We have not heard the last of this legend's music, nor seen the last encounter of squire and squatter. They continue to step out of record album jackets as well as gallery picture frames. They vie for national attention. The iconic characters, linked under the musical title of "The Arkansas Traveler," or the pictorial title, *The Arkansas Traveler*, mark American tension and call for needed balm.

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Appendix Two: Sources of Reproductions

1. **1847.** William Cumming sheet music cover. Mary D. Hudgins collection, University of Arkansas Library. Reissued by Arkansas Territorial Restoration Foundation.
2. **c.1858.** Washburn oil painting. Arkansas History Commission.
3. **1859.** J.H. Bufford lithograph, Boston. Library of Congress copyright deposit copy.
4. **c.1862.** Mose Case sheet music cover. J.R. Blodgett, Buffalo. Hudgins collection.

5. **c.1863.** Mose Case sheet music cover. Oliver Ditson, Boston. Hudgins collection. Reproduced in Richard Jackson, *Popular Songs of Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Dover, 1976.

6. **1864.** Songbook cover. Center for Popular Music collection.

7. **1870.** Currier & Ives. Library of Congress copyright deposit copy.

8. **1870.** Currier & Ives. Library of Congress copyright deposit copy.

9. **1876.** Fortenbury painting. Arkansas Museum of Sciences & History, Little Rock.

10. **c.1895.** Woodcut for Allsop broadside. Arkansas History Commission.

11. **1940.** Book Illustration by Donald McKay for Clyde Brion Davis, *The Arkansas*. New York: Farrer & Rinehart, 1940. 258–59.

12. **1974.** The Arkansaw Traveller Folk Theatre, brochure. Hardy, Arkansas.

13. **1986.** Arkansaw Traveller Folk & Dinner Theatre Souvenir Program, inside back cover. Hardy, Arkansas.

Research chronology, a note: I first searched for Arkansas Traveler details in 1960 while tracing the term "hillbilly music." Seeing Fortenbury's painting at the Smithsonian during 1976, I undertook Graphics #67, completing it in March 1987. Recently, I read Sarah Brown's excellent article, "'The Arkansas Traveler': Southwest Humor on Canvas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 46(Winter, 1987): 348–75. I urge readers to consult her article; I look ahead to her full thesis.

—Archie Green

THE
ARKANSAS TRAVELLER
AND
RACKINSAC WALTZ,
Arranged by
WILLIAM CUMMING.
W.G. PETERS.
Linsell. PETERS & WEBSTER — PETERS & FIELD, Cincinnati.

LIVELY.

RACKINSAC WALTZ .

WALTZ .

967

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1847, by W.G. Peters, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of Ohio.



c.1858: Washburn oil painting, Arkansas History Commission



1859: J.H. Bufford lithograph, Boston, Library of Congress copyright deposit copy

ARKANSAS TRAVELER

BY



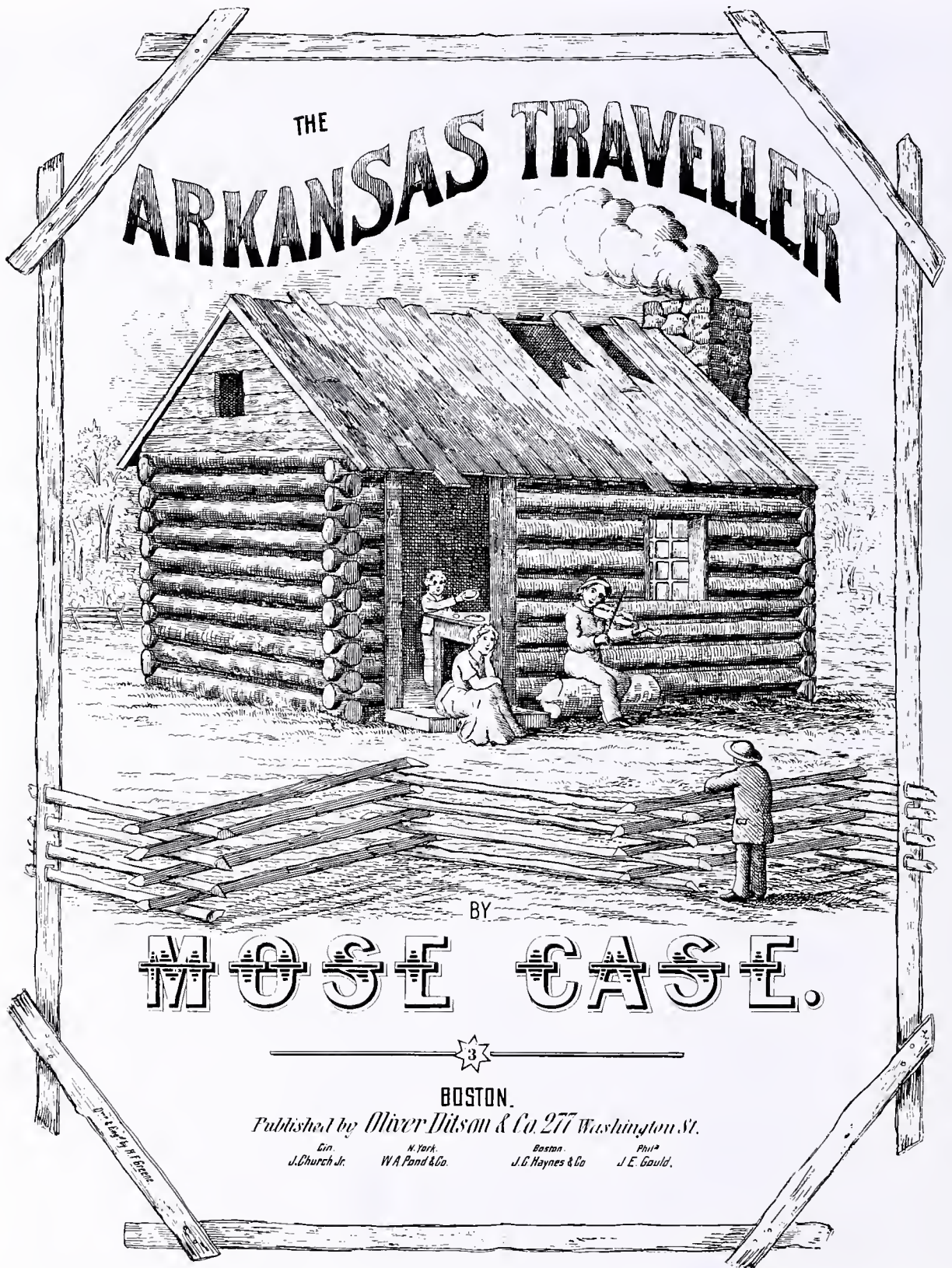
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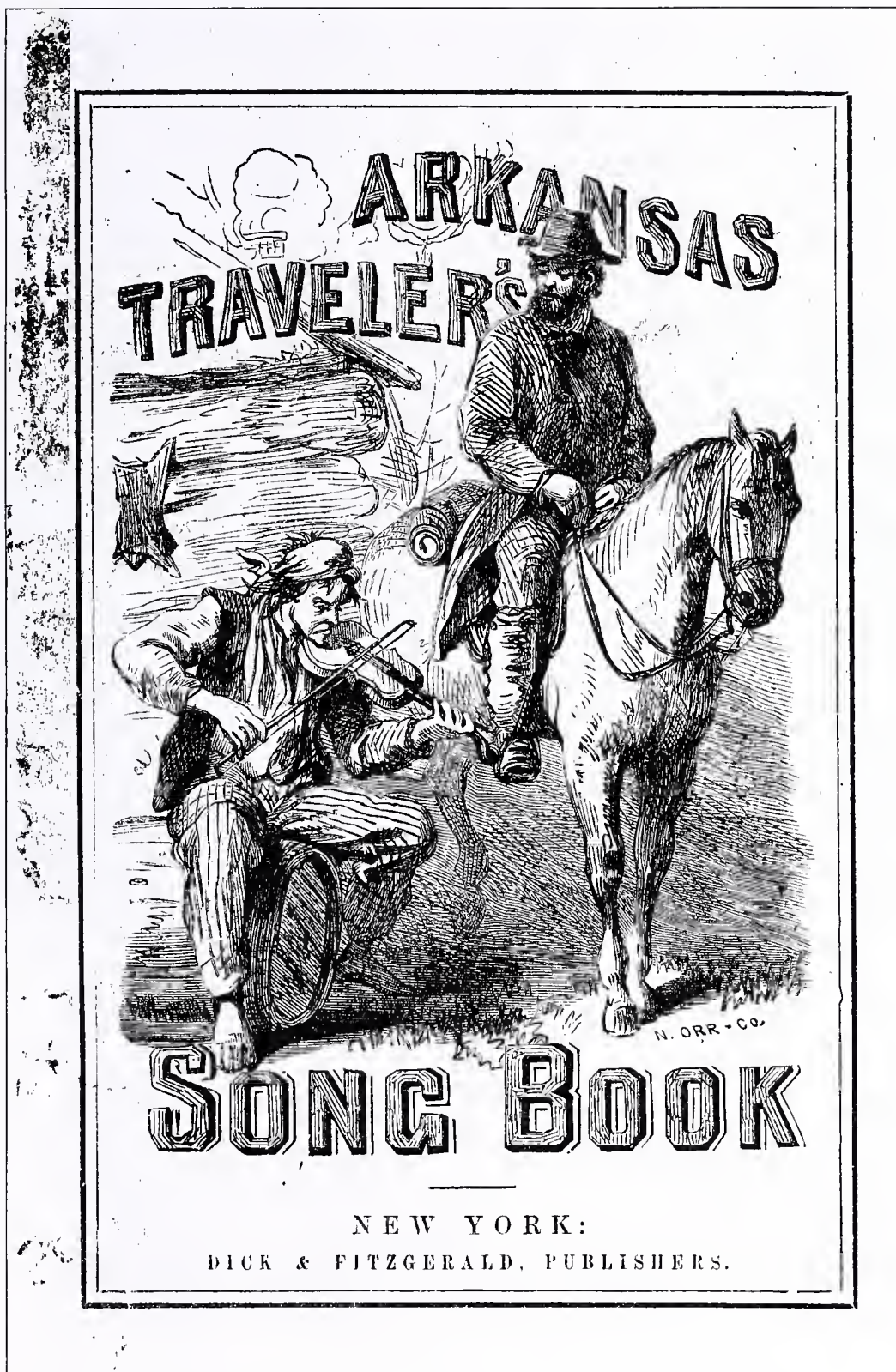
BUFFALO

Published by J.R. BLODGETT 209 Main St

ST CROIX



c. 1863: Mose Case sheet music cover, Oliver Ditson, Boston, Hudgins collection. Reproduced in Richard Jackson, *Popular Songs of Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Dover, 1976



1864: Songbook cover, Center for Popular Music collection



THE ARKANSAS TRAVELLER

SCENE IN THE BACK WOODS OF ARKANSAS.

TRAVELLER TO SQUATTER, CAN YOU GIVE ME SOME NEIGHBORHOOD AND A NIGHTS LODGING? SQUATTER W. SIR, I HAVEN'T GOT ANY ROOM, NOTHIN' TO EAT, A FIDDLER AND— TRAVELLER, WOULD YOU, 'TIS WORTH 60¢ TO? SQUATTER— IT DON'T BE ANYWHERE IT STAYS HERE— (STILL FIDDLING)— TRAVELLER— AND DON'T YOU PLAY THE BEST OF THAT TUNE? SQUATTER— DON'T KNOW IT— TRAVELLER— HERE, GIVE ME THE FIDDLE— PLEASE.

1870: Currier & Ives, Library of Congress copyright deposit copy



THE TURN OF THE TUNE

TRAVELLER PLAYING THE ARKANSAS TRAVELLER

SQUATTER, WHY, SQUATTER, I'VE BEEN THINKIN' YOUR FARE TO KILL THE TURN OF THAT TUNE— JIM, MIGHT IT— JOHNNY, TAKE THE HORSE AND FEED HIM— WITH GAY IN THE BEST OF HIS LAWS, YOU 'TIL WARE— GALLY MAKE UP THE BEST BED— HE CAN 'PLAY THE TURN OF THAT TUNE— COME RIGHT IN AND PLAY 'T ALL TONIGHT— SPRINGER— YOU 'A LODGE WITH A MOUNTAIN OF FIDDLERS.

1870: Currier & Ives, Library of Congress copyright deposit copy



1876: Fortenbury painting, Arkansas Museum of Sciences & History, Little Rock

The Arkansaw Traveler and the Turn of the Tune

From Pope's "Early Days in Arkanaaa." Published by Fred W. Allsopp, Little Rock, Ark.



c.1895: Woodcut for Allsop broadside, Arkansas History Commission



1940: Book Illustration by Donald McKay for Clyde Brion Davis, *The Arkansas*, New York: Farrer & Rinehart, 1940, 258-59

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Slovenian Polka Music: Tradition and Transition

Richard March

An occurrence on a recent Friday night in Milwaukee offered a glimpse at the full range of the city's Slovenian-style polka scene. Lojze Slak, "the Earl Scruggs of the Slovenian button accordion," was in town, on tour from Yugoslavia. Following his appearance at the Schwabenhof picnic grounds of the outskirts of the city, couples danced to the polkas and waltzes delivered by the ten accordions of the Chicago Slovene Button Box Club.

In a West Allis neighborhood bar, across the street from the Allis Chalmers tractor plant, Gary Frank played modern tunes as well as traditional polkas on his piano accordion. Meanwhile, at the Blue Canary Ballroom, concertina player Don Gralak, a young Polish-American, swung through eclectic Slovenian-style medleys which included everything from "Under The Double Eagle" to "The Theme from Benny Hill."

Today, Slovenian-style polka includes two main musical styles: a multi-ethnic contemporary music, typified by Frankie Yankovic; and an assertively ethnic style heard in button box clubs in the Slovenian community.

The roots of this music can be traced to the small region in the eastern Alps that today is the Yugoslavian republic of Slovenia. A small nation of less than two million people, Slovenia has a culture which strongly emphasizes music. At the time of large scale migration from Slovenia to North America (1880-1920), organized religious and secular choirs, marching bands, and dance bands could be found in most Slovenian villages.

This musical activity proved very important in the immigrant context. Living in close quarters, in boarding-houses and ethnic neighborhoods, opportunities to continue Old World Music were ever present. In his autobiography, Frankie Yankovic, the accordionist who revolutionized American polka music, described the music that filled his home in the Collingwood section of Cleveland in the 1920s: "[Max] Zelodec, who worked as a mechanic, would invariably pick up his squeezebox after supper and boarders would start singing. My father would always join in. I'd sit there quiet as a churchmouse and listen to them. They all had good voices. The more they drank, the better they sang."¹

After he managed to obtain his own accordion, Yankovic played while tending a hardware store and during childhood games: "When we played baseball in the street in front of our house, I'd keep the accordion on the porch. I'd play it when our side was batting, and when it was my turn to bat, I'd run down the steps to the plate. If I hit a home run, I'd come back and bang out a particularly lively polka."²

Music permeated daily life. Corner taverns, important in the crowded ethnic neighborhoods, were filled with immigrant music. Milwaukee accordionist Louis Bashell remembers at age seven: "My father would be busy with customers, so he'd set me up on a table, put the accordion in my lap—it was almost as big as me then—and I'd play the old tunes."³

There were and still are Slovenian-American choirs and brass bands, but in account after account the diatonic button accordion is described as the most significant instrument, central to and practically synonymous with, Slovenian music in America. Frankie Yankovic recalls that as a youth making home deliveries for a bakery: "I'd give some neighborhood boy a quick accordion lesson. Nearly every house in Collingwood and on St. Clair [Avenue] had a small boy playing the cheesebox in those days."⁴

Button boxes were treasured items, sometimes brought over by immigrants, or eagerly purchased from local instrument makers such as Cleveland's Anton Mervar or Milwaukee's George Karpek, or ordered by mail from Europe. A new good accordion cost as much as \$200 in the 1920s. This was a big investment, yet one which many Slovenian families clearly felt was worth making. Accordionists had status in the ethnic community. As a solo accordionist could function as a minimal dance band, players could earn enough money to recoup the investment in their instruments. Opportunities to play extended beyond the Slovenian community. Slovenian music is a part of the Alpine music culture, with major keys, symmetrical chord progressions, and pear-shaped tones. Thus, a Slovenian accordionist could earn money playing for Austrians, Bavarians, Swiss, northern Italians, and others.

Contact with other ethnic groups and their music, with American popular music, and with school music classes, broadened the horizons of many young Slovenian-American musicians. Moreover, the American-born felt the urge to create a music reflective of their own experience, much as the immigrant music reflected that of their parents. The button box was an appropriate instrument for the style of music played by Slovenian immigrants, but their children wanted a different, more versatile sound. Since button boxes do not have a full chromatic scale, one cannot play in all keys or execute complicated chord progressions on this instrument. Borrowings from jazz, and "blue notes," are also not possible on a button accordion.

By the mid-1930s, dissatisfaction with the button box's limitations led to an increase in popularity of the more versatile piano accordion. A number of outstanding

accordionists, including Johnny Pecon, Lou Trebar, Louis Bashell, and Frankie Yankovic, emerged from the generation of Slovenian-Americans born in the 1910s and 1920s, and a new musical idiom began to take shape. Though there were many contributors, Frankie Yankovic is clearly the key figure. Much as his contemporary Bill Monroe codified a distinctive bluegrass style out of traditional southern music, Yankovic created a lively, modern music rooted in Slovenian traditions.

Yankovic's basic band included either a piano accordion, solovox, or chordovox (electronic accordions) playing melody; a second piano accordion playing improvised melodic interpolations ("runs" or "riffs"); and a four-string plectrum banjo playing hard rhythmic accents on all four eighth notes of the 2/4 bar. Piano, bass, or drums sometimes provided additional rhythm and, in some bands (but not in Yankovic's), a clarinet or saxophone was used to play additional melody parts.

Like Bill Monroe, Yankovic has, throughout his career, played a grueling series of one-nighters in a crusade for the musical style which carries his strong imprint. Also like Monroe's bluegrass, Yankovic's Slovenian-style borrowed some elements from Afro-American tradition, including improvised riffs, the four-to-the-bar banjo rhythm, and sequential arrangement of instrumental solos.

Though Slovenian, Yankovic and his fellow musicians felt no particular urge to promote their ethnicity but sought to be accepted as contemporary, professional musicians. Yankovic's band wore suits or tuxedos, not ethnic costumes, and played modern instruments rather than ethnic button boxes. They also sang newly-written English lyrics to Slovenian tunes, and borrowed melodies from other cultures.

English lyrics set to Slovenian tunes are usually not strict translations of the original lyrics, but whole new sets of words. For example, the Slovenian "Bod' moja, bod' moja, bom lesnikov dal'" literally translates as: "Be mine, be mine, and I'll give you a hazelnut." But the English lyrics sung to this tune are: "She told me she loved me but oh how she lied."

Though the innovators of the Yankovic-style were primarily Slovenians, their music soon found an enthusiastic following among members of the first American-born generation of other central and east European ethnic groups. As with the bluegrass and urban blues of the same period, Slovenian-style polka primarily attracted an audience of working class people who enjoyed unprecedented economic well-being in the years following World War II. With more leisure time and disposable income, they were eager for music that mediated between their parents' roots and their contemporary experiences.

"I like to think of myself as the blue collar worker's musician," Yankovic has said. "I'm proud of that. After



Frankie Yankovic

all, this country was built on the blood and guts of the blue collar man." Moreover, Yankovic stresses not only that he is a musician *for* the working class, but that he belongs to that group himself: "I'm a blue collar guy and so was my father. So were most of the people I've been close to."⁵ Indeed, very few professional polka musicians ever played full-time; most have had careers as blue collar workers. Johnny Pecon was a custodian at Cleveland's City Hall, Richie Vadnal was a fireman, Roman Possedi worked as a railroad engineer, and John Petrovic was a machinist.

As the music developed an audience outside the Slovenian community, musicians of other ethnic backgrounds began to play in the style. Tops Cardone, an Italian, replaced Johnny Pecon in Yankovic's band as early as 1948. Currently, successful professional Slovenian-style bands are led by Don Gralak who is Polish, Don Lipovac and Johnny Krizancich who are Croatian, Tony and Gary Radamacher and Steve and Vern Meisner who are all German, and Joe Fedorchak, a Ukrainian.

In some areas there were a number of strong exponents of the style, such as the south side of Milwaukee or the east side of Cleveland, the music became the local music of the blue collar bars and dances. And although it was played and enjoyed by people of diverse backgrounds the name "Slovenian-style" stuck. In Chicago, Slovenian-style polka music has developed a devoted audience, though "Polish-style" polka music has a higher profile. Eddie

Korosa is a well-known Chicago exponent of the Slovenian style. His band includes Lithuanian and Polish as well as Slovenian musicians. Each weekend, enthusiastic dancers of equally diverse backgrounds jam the floor at his popular Baby Doll Polka Club on Chicago's southwest side.

Frank Yankovic has been by far the most successful recording artist among Slovenian-style polka musicians. Yankovic's recording career began in 1938, and his first recordings were self-produced 78 rpm discs. Though record company names (Yankee, Joliet, and Jolly) were printed on the labels, Yankovic had the masters recorded at a Cleveland studio, paid all recording expenses, and placed the records in retail stores himself. It was a local market. His main retail outlet seems to have been accordion maker Anton Mervar's music store on St. Clair Avenue in the heart of Cleveland's Slovenian neighborhood.

During World War II, when Yankovic was in military service, he recorded thirty-two sides on the Jolly label before going overseas. Yankovic entrusted the management of his record business to a partner while he served his tour of duty on the European front. During the wartime shellac shortage, much to Yankovic's later dismay, his partner sold all rights to the Jolly sides to Continental Records, an ethnic specialty label in New York. Continental had a shellac supply and not only issued Yankovic's records, but during the Petrillo recording ban also used the purely instrumental numbers to accompany vocalists who sang to the tunes in a variety of languages.

Following the war, Yankovic signed with Columbia Records, with whom he has recorded for nearly forty years. In 1948 and 1949 he had two million-selling records—"Just Because" and "Blue Skirt Waltz." These records played an important part in initiating the polka fad in popular music of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Yankovic's seventieth birthday album, recorded in 1985, won the first Grammy to be presented in the newly-established Polka category.

While these developments were taking place, Slovenian ethnic activity continued more or less unabated in the context of ethnic lodges and churches. Within this ethnic community, however, the Yankovic-style also enjoyed wide acceptance and the piano accordion became the most frequently used instrument through the 1950s and 1960s, overshadowing the button box.

In the 1970s, symbols of ethnic diversity became more accepted in mainstream American society. New contexts proliferated in which ethnic music could be performed, among which were various international festivals and ethnic food fairs. There was a demand for ethnic communities to develop suitable symbols of their group for presentation to the general public. Ethnic particularity in foods, costumes, crafts, music, and dance were sought after.

Within the Slovenian community, there was a revival of interest in the traditional button box accordion as an important ethnic symbol.

According to Edward Hribar, current president of the Slovene National Benevolent Association (SNPJ): "As the Croats have their tamburitza orchestras, their own instrument, they have been really successful in involving youth in the orchestras sponsored by their lodges. Likewise, the button box is our traditional instrument. So we got the idea to organize young people's button box orchestras."⁶

With organizational support from the SNPJ, button box ensembles spread rapidly among adults as well. A convergence of factors encouraged the formation of such ensembles: the interest stimulated by recordings imported from Yugoslavia of button box virtuoso Lojze Slak; the performance contexts created by increased acceptance of and participation in ethnic activities; and the availability of standardized button boxes from the Melodija accordion makers of Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

Through an SNPJ lodge one could order a Melodija button box, and general agreement was reached among the leaders of the button box clubs as to which keys would be standard. The latter point is crucial—diatonic button accordions do not play in all keys, and do not have a chromatic scale. The owner of an Eb, Ab, Db box could never play euphoniously with the owner of an A, D, G box. Furthermore, some older button boxes had reeds tuned to a lower standard pitch than that which is in use today. For a solo accordionist or a lone accordionist in an ensemble of different instruments, this is not a problem, but in a group of ten to thirty button boxes, standardization is essential.

Melodija G, C, F, boxes, tuned to standard concert pitch (A = 440 hertz) are used in button box orchestras today. Groups of this sort have sprung up wherever there are significant Slovenian-American communities. For example, button box orchestras are found in Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, the Iron Range of Minnesota, Fontana, California, and even Tucson, Arizona.

During public performances, button box orchestra members typically dress in full Slovenian folk costume (or at least vests), play older Slovenian folk tunes almost exclusively, and sing in Slovenian. Button boxes are used to play melody, harmony, and counter melody parts, as well as rhythm (which emanates from the left hand basses and chords). The trademark sound of the Slovenian button box is a loud, low bass produced by the "Helicon basses," which are small horn-shaped openings on the left side of the accordion that amplify the bass sound. Some groups have added electric bass guitar and drums for extra rhythm, but the button boxes clearly dominate the sound.

A number of the button box clubs have self-produced record albums. Much in the way Yankovic did in the

1930s, they cut master tapes at commercial studios and have 500 or 1000 records pressed, paying all production expenses in advance, usually out of the club's assets.

The records are hawked by the groups at their performances, are advertised through the mail in Slovenian fraternal newspapers like the SPNJ's "*Prosveta*," or are placed in Slovenian ethnic specialty shops which exist in the larger ethnic communities. A few such albums are sold through the mail by distributors who specialize in polka records, but generally such records are more available through the Slovenian ethnic network than in the multi-ethnic polka subculture.

The music and sound quality of these self-produced albums varies considerably. Some are excellent in every respect, while others are primarily of value as souvenirs to club members, their friends, and relatives.

Unlike the tight Yankovic-style professional bands, the clubs provide places for musicians of lesser technical ability to play. In button box clubs, the ethnic aspect of performance outweighs purely musical concerns. Club members are generally amateurs, who frequently play for little or no remuneration. There is no pressure to reduce the number of players who would divide potential earnings as is the case with professional bands. Participation is an end in itself. This "the more, the merrier" attitude is evident in a recent account in *Polka News* by Tony Petkovsek, a Cleveland area polka promoter: "Ten button accordion groups appeared [at a Slovenian ethnic festival] on two...revolving bandstands. In and near special tent areas, Slovenian music was featured into the wee hours, including the Slak ensemble playing for dancing until dark. Close to 200 musicians participated!"⁷

Though participation is important, there is incentive to strive for virtuosity, as trophies and cash prizes are awarded at button box competitions. The improvised riffs emphasized in the Yankovic-style have been incorporated into the button box clubs' music—with an emphasis on fast, accurately-executed runs.

If the Yankovic-style has influenced the button box revival, the reverse is also true. Yankovic-style bands, recognizing the growing popularity of button boxes, now usually include a few button box numbers in dance sets and on record albums.

But whether the band is Yankovic-style or a button box group, the music is dance music and the dancers never seem to get enough. As Raymond Podboy of the Chicago Slovene Button Box Club says: "My dad always said about this music, 'if you're dead you gotta get up and dance.'"⁸

Notes

1. Frank Yankovic and Robert Dolgan, *The Polka King: The Life of Frankie Yankovic*. Cleveland: Dillon and Liederbach, 1977, 32.
2. *Ibid.*, 33-34.
3. Louis Bashell, Personal communication to author, July 1984.
4. Yankovic and Dolgan, 38.
5. *Ibid.*, 4.
6. Edward Hribar. Personal communication to author, May 1977.
7. Tony Petkovsek, "Tony's Polka Village," *Polka News* 15(25 September 1985): 9.
8. Raymond Podboy. Personal communication to author, September 1985.

The Early Career of Whoopee John Wilfahrt

Kip Lornell

My parents were born in south-central Minnesota and, during the 1960s, our family often returned there to visit relatives. We usually spent a day or two in New Ulm, which is located about sixty miles south of Minneapolis. My relatives knew of my musical interests and often spoke of local musicians like Whoopee John Wilfahrt, while they listened to KAUJ, "The Polka Station of the Nation" (a slogan the station kept until about 1980).

My research has focused on blues, gospel, and old-time country music, but the stories of Whoopee John have always intrigued me. As I heard more about Wilfahrt, the Six Fat Dutchmen, and others, it became clear that Whoopee John was a regional musical hero on the order of Charlie Poole in North Carolina or Clifton Chenier in Louisiana. Because of his profound regional impact, Whoopee John Wilfahrt deserves to be better known and appreciated by enthusiasts of American music.

In July 1986, I returned to Minnesota in order to visit relatives and conduct basic historical research on Wilfahrt. This brief article focuses on his career before World War II, especially the period in Brown County prior to his move to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. I emphasize this period because it represents Wilfahrt's roots. His career following World War II is distinctly separate and deserves fuller consideration than I am able to provide in this essay.

John Anthony Wilfahrt was born on 11 May 1883, in Clear Lake, Sigel Township, about six miles southwest of New Ulm. Many Brown County residents emigrated from Czechoslovakia or Germany; the Wilfahrts were of Bohemian decent. At the turn of the twentieth century, New Ulm, Minnesota, was the county's cultural and economic center. It also supported several breweries.

The Wilfahrts were not a musical family, but at least two of their eleven children, John and Eddie, began playing music after hearing the small brass bands that performed for many local social functions. By 1905 John had obtained a concertina and taught himself to play. About 1909, he organized a three-piece extended family band that included his younger brother, Edwin, on clarinet, and a cornet-playing cousin, Edward Kretsch. The band's early engagements often involved playing for weddings, which meant accompanying the newlyweds from the church to the reception on the back of a horse-drawn wagon. Wilfahrt's band would continue to play throughout the day and sit as honored guests at the dinner table.

Throughout the teens, Wilfahrt and his band performed polkas, waltzes, schottisches, and mazurkas for audiences in Brown County. Wedding parties often featured his band, as did Saturday night barn dances and family gatherings. His repertoire at this time was probably quite conservative, reflecting his Bohemian roots and those of his audience. His music was quite popular and Wilfahrt had as much work as he could handle.

Despite his deep involvement with this music, Wilfahrt did not turn to music full-time until the mid-1920s. He tried his hand at different jobs, including working at a hardware store and at a tire company. About 1920 he began using his childhood nickname, Hans, for the band's billing ("Hans Wilfahrt and his Concertina Orchestra") and was slowly moving towards a greater professional commitment to music.

In 1924 Wilfahrt made a decisive change in his musical career when he began traveling to the Twin Cities for radio broadcasts over WLAC (which later became WCCO). He also increased the band's size to about eight pieces. More importantly, he quit his day job and began relying upon music for his entire salary—a bold move for a man with a wife and a growing family. For the next five years Wilfahrt remained in New Ulm, though he toured extensively through southern Minnesota and, increasingly, into southwestern Wisconsin. His reputation grew as he travelled, playing in small towns and for rural granges. However, his radio broadcasts became more important as he moved into music full-time and looked harder for bookings.

In September of 1927, he took another logical step in his career when he participated in a joint Columbia/Okeh recording session held in Minneapolis. Using the moniker, "Hans Wilfahrt's Concertina Orchestra, New Ulm," the five-piece band recorded nineteen selections that were released in the Columbia 12000 and Okeh 10000 series. These records sold well within the region, but apparently found a very small audience outside of the Minnesota/Wisconsin Bohemian, Czech, and German market. The documentary evidence of this session is contrary to New Ulm oral tradition. In Brown County, I was informed that Wilfahrt's first recordings were in Chicago in June, 1928. This was actually Wilfahrt's second session, but the first to result in releases which were billed as "John Wilfahrt's Concertina Orchestra."

Within one year of the Chicago session, Wilfahrt left New Ulm and settled in the Twin Cities. There were several reasons for this urban migration. It brought the band closer to their increasingly important radio engagements and made it easier to find more regular jobs in the inns, hotels, and clubs in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Wilfahrt had personal as well as professional reasons for making the move. In 1929 he left his family to begin living with a younger woman in Minneapolis. Their relationship was not kept secret and caused a great local scandal. Because Wilfahrt was of German-Catholic heritage, a divorce was out of the question. The situation was so

unusual and public that Wilfahrt had little choice but to leave New Ulm. This extra-legal relationship remained strong through the years and the couple was together until Wilfahrt's death of a heart attack on 15 June 1961.

The move to the Twin Cities signaled other shifts in Wilfahrt's career. A few of the band members declined to leave New Ulm and were replaced. Wilfahrt also increased the size of his band to between seven and nine pieces. Sometime around 1930 he started to use the "Whoopie John" nickname. The earliest evidence for its public use that I have been able to locate is on his 1933 Vocalion recordings, which were billed as "'Whoopie John' Wilfahrt and his Orchestra." New Ulm oral tradition maintains that he received the nickname when he arrived late to a barn dance and a patron cried out "Whoopie, here comes John!"

Wilfahrt's Twin Cities headquarters were busy. He did all of his own booking and found himself working throughout Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and as far afield as Nebraska. In addition, the group began playing more large hotels and ballrooms such as the Prom and the Marigold. Their regular Saturday night engagement at the Deutsches House was broadcast live for a half-hour over clear-channel radio station WCCO.

He continued to find an audience in the Czech and German communities which had been settled in the region beginning in the mid-19th century. Along with the major urban engagements, Whoopie John still played in many small towns and rural centers. Up until World War II he remained an important cultural and musical hero within his own ethnic community, although he was also beginning to become popular with the Swedish, Finnish, and Norwegian population.

World War II changed many things. Because of the Nazi regime there was some anti-German sentiment in the United States, which tainted popular figures like Wilfahrt. Gas and tire shortages also curtailed travel and touring for musical groups. Finally, it was difficult to obtain the shellac necessary to press records and this problem, along with the musician's union recording ban, effectively stopped all recording for nearly a year beginning in mid-1942.

Following the conclusion of World War II, Whoopie John and his band resumed touring and recording. When television arrived in Minneapolis about 1952, he was there, too. By this time his music had changed to accommodate his widespread popularity. His repertoire included more Scandinavian and popular tunes, while the band had nearly doubled in size. During the 1950s, Wilfahrt's band reached a new audience that was far removed from the small Brown County weddings he had played for some forty years before.

Like the bands of Tommy Dorsey, Count Basie, and Duke Ellington, Whoopie John's orchestra did not cease touring upon its leader's death. Two sons, Patrick and

Dennis, took over and continued operating the band. In 1966 Patrick died of a heart attack and the group struggled until 1968, when Dennis finally gave up. This was not the end, however, for in 1974 Vern Steffel took over the library and name, and toured with the new Whoopie John Band until 1986. More than a quarter-century after Whoopie John's death, his music remains an important and integral part of Minnesota's cultural and musical history.

Acknowledgements

I could not have written this piece without the help of my cousins, Tom and Mike Esser, who introduced me to Wilfahrt's daughter, Evelyn Brown, of New Ulm, and the staff of the Brown County Historical Society. Furthermore, La Vern Rippley of the Department of German, St. Olaf College, helped to identify photographs, and assisted in other ways.



Whoopie John Wilfahrt's First Band, circa 1910; probably Eddie Wilfahrt (clarinet), John Wilfahrt (accordion), and Edward Kretsch (cornet) (Photo courtesy of the Brown County Historical Society)



Whoopee John Wilfahrt's Original Concertina Orchestra, 1920; John Wilfahrt, accordion (Photo courtesy of the Brown County Historical Society)



The Whoopee John Band, mid-1920s; Left to right: Alfred Kopetzki, Hugo Hoffmeister, John Wilfahrt, Ernest Zimmerman, and John "Boom Boom" Bauer (Photo courtesy of the Brown County Historical Society)

Whoopee John Wilfahrt Discography: 1927-1941

Compiled by and courtesy of Richard K. Spottswood

This discography, which covers Wilfahrt's pre-World War II recording career, was compiled by Richard K. Spottswood as part of an exhaustive project documenting ethnic recordings up to 1943. The resulting discography will be published by the University of Illinois Press. The information comes primarily from the files of Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and Music Corporation of America (MCA), which own the rights to these recordings. I am grateful to Mr. Spottswood for sharing this information.

I have added the notation of probable personnel. This information comes from a poster from late 1927 or early 1928 (now in the collection of the Brown County Historical Society) announcing a local dance played by Wilfahrt. The poster includes the group's personnel, and notes their broadcasts over WCCO and their Okeh records.

Kip Lornell

The numbers in the left column are matrix/control numbers assigned to each selection at the time of recording. The right column contains the issue number(s) assigned to each record as it was released for sale. Many of these selections were simultaneously marketed to more than one foreign language group, hence

the multiple issue numbers, and titles in German, Polish, English, etc.

Label abbreviations:

Br = Brunswick

Co = Columbia

Cq = Conqueror

De = Decca

De DL = Decca 33 1/3 rpm issue

De ED = Decca 45 rpm issue

Me = Melotone

Pana = Panachord

Pe = Perfect

Vo = Vocalion

Vo VL = Vocalion 33 1/3 rpm issue

All releases on 78 rpm except as noted above. Panachord is an English company.

Primary artist credit is given in bold before a session, or group of sessions. Alternate artist credits for releases in various languages are noted below the relevant sessions.

[The absence of diacritical marks for the various foreign languages is a limitation of the typeface.—ed.]

Hans Wilfahrt's Concertina Orchestra, New Ulm

Minneapolis, September 9, 1927

Probable personnel and instrumentation:

John Wilfahrt - concertina; Alfred A. Kopetzki - trumpet; Ernest Zimmerman - trombone; Hugo Hofmeister - tenor saxophone; Emil Domeier - brass bass

W 81328-B	Mariechen Walzer	Ok 10465
	Marie-Waltz	Co 12172-F
W 81329-B	Gruss Aus Minneapolis-Polka	Ok 10458
	Zuzia Polka	Ok 11372
	Ruzicka-Polka	Ok 17329
	En Sondagsmorgon-Polka	Ok 19226
	Beginner's Polka	Co 12173-F
W 81330-B	Das Fidelen Ulmer-Schottisch	Ok 10457
	The Jolly Ulmers-Schottische	Co 12177-F
W 81331-B	St. Paul Walzer	Ok 10457, Co 12177-F
	Wieczor-Walc	Ok 11375
	Flickan Fran Sodermalm-Vals	Ok 19226
W 81332-B	Roeslein Walzer	Ok 10458
	Piekna Roza-Walc	Ok 11372
	Nevinny Valcik	Ok 17329
	Rosalie-Waltz	Co 12173-F
W 81333-B	Kinder Polka	Ok 10465
	Perskie Oko-Polka	Ok 11375
	Children's Polka	Co 12172-F

Ok 11372 and 11375 as ORKIESTRA WIEJSKA; 17329 as CESKA TANECNI HUDBA; 19226 as DANSORKESTER

Chicago, June 19, 1928

Instrumentation as before

W 400904-A	Das Weiss Kein Mensch-Landler	Ok 10500
	No One Knows-Landler	Co 12161-F, 12465-F, Vo 15975
W 400905-B	Hanserl Polka	Ok 10507
	Ne Skubek-Polka	Ok 26083
	Johnny Polka	Co 12158-F, Vo 15977
W 400906-B	Warren Walzer	Ok 10507
	Posvicensky Valcik	Ok 17344
	Wonder Waltz	Co 12158-F, Vo 15977
W 400907-B	New Ulm-Polka	Ok 10500, Co 12161-F, 12465-F, Vo 15975
W 400908-B	Chicago Walzer	Ok 10526, 17336, Co 196-F,
		12156-F, Vo 15978
	Klaipedos Valcas	Ok 26071
W 400909-B	Elen Polka	Ok 10526, 17336, Co 196-F,
		12156-F, Vo 15978

Ok 26083 as KAIMIECIU ORKESTRA

Chicago, June 20, 1928

Instrumentation as before

W 400914-A	Ich Liebe Dich-Walzer	Ok 10498
	Ja Te Milujen-Valcik	Ok 17355, Co 190-F
	I Love You-Waltz	Ok 10513
W 400915-B	Hanswurst Polka	Ok 10513
	Nas Honza Polka	Ok 17340
	Honey-Polka	Co 12160-F, Vo 15976
W 400916-A	Kleine Freundin Walzer	Ok 10513
	Mala Pritelkyne-Valcik	Ok 17340
	Little Sweetheart Waltz	Co 12160-F, Vo 15976
W 400917-A	Kikiri-Polka	Ok 10498, 17355, Co 190-F, 12164-F
	Gaidys-Polka	Ok 26071
W 500010-	Mein Suesser Schatz-Walzer	Ok 85188, Co 55239-F(12")
W 500011-	Fruehlings Polka	Ok 85188, Co 55239-F(12")

Ok 17340 and 17355 as CESKA TANEČNÍ HUDBA; 26071 as KARISKAS BENAS; 85188 and Co 55239-F as HANS WILFAHRTS KAPELLE, CHICAGO

John Wilfahrt's Concertina Orchestra**Minneapolis, 1929**

Instrumentation as before

MP 1-	Jolly Lumber Jack-March	Vo 15780
	El Campesino Alegre [The Happy Farmer]-March	Vo 8306, Me MS16080, Pe P-928
MP 3-	Helena [Elena]-Polka	Vo 8306, 15780, 60143, Me MS16080, Pe P-928
MP 5-	Martha-Polka	Vo 8313, 15788, 60143, Me MS16079, Pe P-927
MP 6-	California-Polka	Vo 8313, 15788, Me MS16079, Pe P-927
	Isabella-Waltz	Vo 15781
	Isabel-Vals	Vo 8291
	Tyrolean Waltz	Vo 15781
	Tirols-Vals	Vo 8291

Vo 8306, 8313, Pe P-927 and P-928 as ORQUESTA DE JUAN WILFAHRT; Vo 8291 as ORQUESTA DE CONCERTINA JUAN WILFAHRT; Vo 60143 as ORKIESTRA KONCERTYNOWA JANA WILFAHRTA (New Ulm Orchestra); Me MS16079 and MS16080 as ORQUESTA CONCERTINA INTERNACIONAL

Minneapolis, January 28, 1930

Instrumentation as before

MP 702-	At the Mill-March	Br 414
	En El Molino-Marcha	Br 41175
	W Mynie-Marsz	Vo 60224
MP 703-	Dudes March	Br 414
	Marcha De Los Petimetres	Br 41175
	title untraced	Vo 60217
MP 704-	Laendler No. 13	Br 431, Vo 15900
	Danza Rusticana No. 13	Br 41143
MP 705-	Homecoming Waltz	Br 431, Vo 15903
	[Vals De Llegada El Hogar]	
	Vals Del Regreso	Br 41143
MP 706-	Tinker [Dratenik]-Polka	Br 407, Vo 15899
	Polka Del Latonero	Br 41114
	Blaszana Polka	Vo 60204
MP 707-	Clarinet Polka	Br 407, 41114, Vo 15899, 60204
	Polka Pointe Au Pic	Me M18021
Me M18021 as L'ORCHESTRE CHARTIER; Vo 60204, 60217 and 60224 as ORKIESTRA KONCERTYNOWA JANA WILFAHRTA (New Ulm Orchestra)		

Chicago, November 2, 1930

Instrumentation as before

C 6522-	Forsaken Love [Amor Desdenado]-Waltz	Br 547, Br 5A1118, Pana 25101, Vo 15903
	Zapomniana Miosc	Vo 60230
C 6523-	Blue Eyes-Waltz	Br 488
	Niebieskie Oczy	Vo 60210
C 6524	Slow Motion [Laendler No. 2]-Waltz	Vo 15855
C 6525	Grandmother's Laendler No. 5-Waltz	Vo 15855
C 6526	Snow Flower Polka	Br 587, Vo 15904
	[Polka De Flor De Nieve]	
C 6527-	Golden Days Polka	Br 587, Vo 15904
	[Polka De Los Dias Dorados]	
C 6528-	The Jolly Crowd-Polka	Br 488
	Wesoe Towarzys Two-Polka	Vo 60210
C 6529-	Aunt Ella's Polka	Br 547, Br 5A1118, Pana 25101, Vo 15902
	[Polka De Tia Ella]	
	Ciotki Elli-Polka	Vo 60230
C 6530-	Katrina Polka [Polka Catalina]	Br 574
C 6531-	Village Tavern Polka	Br 534, Vo 15905
	[Polka De La Taberna De La Villa]	
XC 6532-	Jolly Hunter's Waltz	Br 20099(12")
	[Vals De La Cazadores Felices]	
XC 6533-	Merry-Go-Round [Volantin]-Polka	Br 20099(12")

Vo 60210 and 60230 as ORKIESTRA KONCERTYNOWA JANA WILFAHRTA; Pana 25101 as BARNEY'S CONCERTINA ORCHESTRA

"Whoopee John" Wilfahrt and His Orchestra

Chicago, December 6, 1933

John Wilfahrt - concertina; unknown trumpet, 2 saxophones, trombone, piano, tuba, drum

C 670-	Mariechen Waltz	Br 607, Vo 15898
	Vals Mariache	Vo 8524
C 671-	St. Paul Waltz (A.J. Vass)	Br 604, Co 12432-F, 10039, Cq 9611, Vo 15895
C 672-	Beautiful Youth [Schone Ist Die Jugendzeit]	Br 606, Vo 15897
C 673-	Cuckoo Waltz (Jonassen)	Br 603, Vo 15894
C 674-	O Susanna-Schottische (Hinsch)	Br 603, Co 12470-F, Vo 15894
C 675-	Holz Auction-Schottische	Br 606, Vo 15897
C 676-	Harmony Schottische	Br 605, Vo 15896
	Armonia-Schotis	Vo 8531
C 677-	Old Time Schottische No. 1 (Wilfahrt)	Br 602, Co 12470-F, Cq 9610, Vo 15893
C 678-	Coco Bola Polka (Wilfahrt)	Br 607, Vo 15898
	Rio Bravo-Polka	Vo 8524

Chicago, December 7, 1933

Instrumentation as before

C 679-	Minneapolis Polka (J. Wilfahrt)	Br 604, Co 12432-F, 10039, Cq 9611, Vo 15895
C 680-	West Wind Polka (L. Vitak)	Br 605, Vo 15896
	Brisas Del Oeste-Polka	Vo 8531
C 681-	Old Time Polka No. 1	Br 602, Co 12559-F, Cq 9610, Vo 15893

Chicago, October 24, 1934

John Wilfahrt - concertina; unknown 3 saxophones, piano, tuba, drum

C 754-	Lindenau-Polka	Vo 15934
C 755-	Edna-Polka	Vo 15906
C 756-	Spring Time-Polka (arr. Louis Vitak)	Vo 15907
C 757-	Barbara-Polka (W. Schuckert)	Vo 15908
C 758-	Agnes-Polka (J. Wilfahrt)	Vo 15919
C 759-	Walburga-Polka (J. Wilfahrt)	Vo 15942, Co 12490-F
C 760-	Laendler No. 7-Waltz (arr. H. Schuckert)	Vo 15908
C 761-	Laendler No. 20-Waltz (arr. H. Schuckert)	Vo 15907, Co 12559-F, 10040
C 762-	Auntie's Waltz	Vo 15906
C 763-	Eddie's Waltz (J. Wilfahrt)	Vo 15942, Co 12490-F
C 764-	The Orphan-Waltz (A.L. Maresh)	Vo 15934
C 765-	I'm Coming-Waltz (arr. H. Schuckert)	Vo 15919

New York, January 1938

Instrumentation as above, except add unknown xylophone

63210-	Helena Polka (arr. Louis Vitak)	De 1844, 3678, 45021, DL8434(33), ED2483(45)
63211-	California Polka	De 1844, 3727, 45057, ED2161(45)
63212-	Martha Polka	De 1686, 45010, DL5236(33), Vo VL3744(33)
63213-	Clarinet Polka (arr. Karl Echtner)	De 1711, 3737, 45022, DL8434(33), ED2485(45)

63214-	Holzauction-Schottische (arr. Louis Vitak)	De 1711, 45021, DL8434(33), ED2485(45)
63215-	Oh Susanna-Schottische	De 1687, 3727, 45058
63216-	Little Fisherman's Waltz	De 1686, 45023, Vo VL3744(33)
63217-	Swedish Waltz	De 1687, 3748, 45022

Whoopee John Wilfahrt and His Band

Chicago, September 19, 1939

Instrumentation as before

91785-	Haselby Steppen-Polka	De 2944, 45027, ED2161(45)
91786-	Grasshopper Polka	De 2996, 3678, 45046
91787-	Hello Joe Polka (John A. Wilfahrt)	De 3040, 45003, ED2375(45)
91788-	Lager Polka (John A. Wilfahrt)	De 3086, 45026
91789-	Beer Barrel Polka in Waltz Tempo	De 2996, 3748, 45024, Vo VL3744(33)
91790-	Lordagsvalsen [Saturday Waltz]	De 3045, 45003, Vo VL3744(33)
91791-A	Edna Schottische (John A. Wilfahrt)	De 2944, 3730, 45026
91792-	Clarinet Schottische	De 3143, 45088
91793-	Kalle Pe-Polka	De 3143, 45025
91794-	Ring Dance Mazurka	De 3086, 45027

Chicago, March 26, 1941

Instrumentation as before

93612-	Saxophone Schottische (John A. Wilfahrt)	De 3964, 45025
93613-	Lingonberry Schottische	De 4161, 45046, Vo VL3744(33)
93614-	Our Mike-Polka	De 4161, 45011, DL5236(33)
93615-	Whoopee John Polka	De 3780, 45010, DL5236(33), Vo VL3744(33)
93616-	Cherry Picker's Polka	De 3877, 45023, Vo VL3744(33)
93617-	Favorite Polka	De 4423, 45069, DL5236(33)
93618-	Two Canaries-Polka	De 3964, 45047
93619-	Happy Hugo Hambo (John A. Wilfahrt)	De 4423, 45045
93620-	Red Beer Polka	De 3780, 45011, DL5236(33), Vo VL3744(33)
93621-	Tulak Polka (arr. Louis Vitak)	De 3877, 45024, ED2161(45)

Whoopee John Wilfahrt and His Orchestra

Chicago, November 18, 1941

Instrumentation as before

93799-	No No Polka [Ale Ne Polka] (Karel Vacek, arr. Joseph P. Elsnic)	De 4342, 45012, DL5140(33), DL5236(33)
93800-	Repeat Polka (J. Vejvoda)	De 4329, 45012, DL5140(33), DL5236(33)
93801-	Evergreen Polka (arr. K. Echtner)	De 4342, 45025
93802-A	Unita Polka	De 4411, 45009, DL5236(33)
93803-	Bass Polka (John A. Wilfahrt)	De 45002, ED2375(45)
93804-	Half Schottische (John A. Wilfahrt)	De 4329, 45057, DL8434(33), ED2484(45)
93805-A	Twin City Schottische (John A. Wilfahrt)	De 4411, 45047
93806-	Borghild Rheinlaender	De 45000, Vo VL3744(33)
93807-	Blue Eyes Polka	De 45000, ED2161(45), Vo VL3744(33)
93808-A	Jenny [Heinie]-Polka (K. Echtner)	De 45002, ED2375(45)

Popular Music and Gender Studies: A Research Priority

James R. McDonald

Popular music has become an important area of scholarly research as well as an integral component in higher education curricula within the past twenty years. A study by Von Schilling in 1979 indicated that of ten percent of colleges and universities surveyed in the United States, there were 120 courses devoted to music.¹ Projecting those institutions not surveyed, it is possible that over 1,000 courses are offered on popular music each year. Given potential enrollments, the number of students engaged in the academic study of popular music conceivably numbers in the thousands.

With such numbers a factor, it would seem that the issue of gender studies within the area of popular music would be a logical arena for scholars from a number of disciplines. Such is not the case. For example, Freudiger and Almquist point out in their study of sex-roles and popular music lyrics that "no studies have been conducted to determine how much of the sex-role imagery contained in popular lyrics is actually perceived by adolescents."²

The relative absence of gender studies is one of the significant curiosities in the research which has been done on popular music. While there have been studies of sexism in rock lyrics, as well as content analyses from a variety of perspectives, only a small number of thorough examinations of gender studies within popular music exist. As B. Lee Cooper has written: "In only a few instances have the rich oral testimonies of contemporary women been considered, let alone thoroughly investigated."³ And male gender studies have been nonexistent.

One of the best resources for scholars in popular music is Cooper's *The Popular Music Handbook: A Resource Guide for Teachers, Librarians, and Media Specialists*.⁴ If one wishes to explore lyrics, album covers, disc jockeys, motion picture soundtracks, dance music, religious rock, or a variety of other arcane subjects related to popular music, Cooper's book, which follows his earlier *Images of American Society in Popular Music*, offers numerous references.⁵

Within the field of gender studies in popular music, one can turn to the index and discover forty-seven bibliographical citations for "Women in Popular Music," many of which address sexism in music.⁶ However, there are no citations for "Men in Popular Music," nor are there references under synonymous categories.

While the area of women's studies within the realm of popular music has received at least minimal coverage,

particularly the issue of sexism, there has been very little systematic study of men in popular music.

In this essay, I will suggest that gender analysis of popular music lyrics is a means for lessening this research gap. I will offer examples of lyric analysis which clearly demonstrate that the analyses of popular song lyrics—indeed, that the song lyrics themselves—are male-oriented and, consequently, not balanced. Finally, I will suggest types of gender studies which are needed and argue that the teaching of popular music is a viable method of understanding and expanding our perceptions of gender studies.

Content analyses of song lyrics have helped elucidate male-female relationships from several perspectives. In the music of the fifties, for example, women were written about by men and were called "baby," or "angel," or portrayed as ethereal goddesses, as in the songs "Venus" and "Diana."⁷ Female characters in the songs recorded by "girl groups" of the early sixties were frequently waiting for their men to return from James Deanesque escapades as "leaders of the pack."⁸

A close look at the lyrics to several contemporary songs reveals the importance of gender analysis in popular music and also indicates the different attitudes toward gender roles currently reflected in those lyrics. The first area I will consider is that of songs performed by women but written or co-written by men; the second is that of songs written and performed by men which deal specifically with male attitudes.

I find it curious that male songwriters are often the creative force behind songs performed by women. For example, an analysis of the song "What's Love Got to Do With It?," performed and recorded by Tina Turner, reveals a paradoxical attitude toward male-female relationships. This song, which won a Grammy award as the Best Song of 1984, was written by two men, Terry Britten and Graham Lyle. The unstated message of the song is that males know what women want from a relationship, as evident in the first few lines of the lyrics: "You must understand/That the touch of your hand/Makes my pulse react/That it's only the thrill/Of boy meeting girl/Opposites attract." The implication is that physical attraction is, for women, intense and, more significantly, that women know that men are aware of this.

The next lines state that while the speaker recognizes the power of physical attraction, she is leery of it for fear of being hurt. What further complicates the attitude pro-

jected is that the speaker, rather than denying the possibility of a relationship, chooses to deny the emotion of love and, presumably, settle for the physical attraction: "There's a name for it/There is a phrase for it/But whatever the reason/You do it for me." In short, the attitudes projected are a reversal of those of the early sixties. Now, it is the woman who can choose to deny love, not the man.⁹

While this is a significant change from lyrics of earlier generations, where women would have been labeled tramps, or whores, for projecting this attitude, in contemporary America this attitude may be considered commonplace. Without the strength of the women's movement, this song would probably not have been recorded by a female performer.

The song "Better Be Good To Me," also performed by Turner and written by two women and one man (Nicky Chinn, Holly Night, and Mike Chapman), also shows the somewhat paradoxical role of women in male-female relationships. Although it can be viewed superficially as a song which demonstrates the strength of women, under the surface we find a traditional theme which suggests weakness. The opening lyrics set the stage: "A prisoner of your love/Entangled in your web/Hot whispers in the night/I'm captured by your spell captured/Oh yes I'm touched by this show of emotion/Should I be fractured by your lack of devotion/Should I, should I?" Playing on the theme of love as a captive force, the speaker suggests in these (and successive) lines that she recognized the insincerity of her partner's intentions.

The strength of the female message is conveyed through the song's refrain: "Oh you better be good to me/That's how its got to be now/Cause I don't have no use/For what you loosely call the truth/Oh, you better be good to me/Yes you better be good to me." As the song continues, so does the demand, but an ultimatum ("or else"—specific consequences) is never made. The speaker apparently succumbs to the male pursuit, still insisting that he should "be good" to her. By the end of the song this sounds more like a plea than a command: "And I don't understand/What's your plan/That you can't/Be good to me/What I can't feel/I surely cannot see why can't you/Be good to me."¹⁰

This is an example of male-female songwriting which may be viewed as feminist-oriented, but which is, in fact, male-centered in the traditional attitude projected. The problem here is message confusion. Are we to assume that the audience accepts Turner as speaker, or are we to acknowledge the male creative impetus behind the lyrics? In short, whose message is it? This concern may appear a mere quibble to many, but renewed interest in the impact of lyrics on their audience, particularly young teenagers, suggests that such distinctions are important in comprehending the actual meaning of a song.

A final example is the song "Material Girl," performed

by Madonna, but written by two men, Peter Brown and Robert Rans. This song has a theme similar to Turner's "What's Love Got to Do With It?" The song's lyrics suggest that women do not worry about love, as long as there is enough money to satisfy them: "Only boys that save their pennies/Make my rainy day/We're living in a material world/And I'm a material girl."¹¹ The song is written from the woman's point of view; she takes an active, rather than a passive role. The value judgments made in the song however, are traditional in the same manner as many fifties songs.

What remains problematic in these three examples is that the images of women projected in the songs have been created, totally or partially, by men. Even in the song written by two women and one man, where women are in the majority in the creative process, the image of women is one of passivity and weakness. Notwithstanding the fact that the messages are delivered by women, the songs presume that males know what women need, and that males know how to circumvent those needs. Perhaps more importantly, these underlying messages may be perceived by contemporary women as perfectly acceptable. Males, consciously or not, are writing songs which can be appealing to women, liberated or not, and which suggest how women should act. Such songs may both speak to and formulate female values.

Perhaps a more interesting problem, however, is that of songs written by men which deal with male attitudes. An analysis of three such songs, "Real Men," by Joe Jackson, "You're Not Drinking Enough," by Don Henley, and "She's The Boss," by Mick Jagger, reveals the polarization of male values prevalent in today's society, and also further demonstrates the possibilities of using popular music as a means to begin addressing men's studies.

Jackson's song is a social comment on the battle of the sexes, arguing, as the song concludes, that "if there's war between the sexes/Then there'll be no people left." Prior to this, however, Jackson discusses the sexual confusion apparent in the male attitude, raising the question, "What's a man now—What's a man mean/Is he rough or is he rugged/Is he cultural and clean?" Even the gay community is part of the confusion for Jackson as he writes, "All the gays are macho/Can't you see the leather shine?"

But the impact of the song is in its description of the passive confusion of modern men: "Time to get scared—time to change plan/Don't know how to treat a lady/Don't know how to be a man/Time to admit—what you call defeat/Cause there's women running past you now/And you just drag your feet." Here we have an honest, sensitive assessment of the predicament of modern men and what some are obviously feeling. It is significant that the song is both performed and written by a male.¹²

The second song, "You're Not Drinking Enough," is a country ballad from veteran rock and roll singer Don Henley, formerly of the Eagles. The song has a basic theme of unrequited love. The speaker, trying to comfort a friend who has lost his lover, has an insight into the situation which is both stereotypic and sympathetic: "Well, the perfume she wore you can buy down at the Five & Dime/ But on some other woman it don't smell the same in your mind/ You keep telling yourself you can take it/ Telling yourself that you're tough/ But you still wanna hold her/ You must not be drinking enough."

Later the speaker, while still giving the same prescription for his friend's pain, makes the following observation: "She passed on your passion and stepped on your pride/ Turns out you ain't quite so tough/ 'Cause you still wanna hold her/ You must not be drinkin' enough."¹³ Whether or not we are in agreement with the speaker's advice, he has at least identified the source of the problem—his friend has had his pride hurt. It is rare to see stereotypic male pride clearly identified in popular song lyrics. The juxtaposition of stereotypic values and contemporary realization is rare and, to me, refreshing.

The final example, "She's the Boss," was written and performed by Mick Jagger for his first solo album. Long criticized for the sexist standards of his lyrics as a member of the Rolling Stones, Jagger has written words here which reflect both a matured viewpoint and some tongue-in-cheek posturing. Using the concept of role reversal as subject matter, Jagger's lyrics poke fun at traditional male-female roles, yet warn contemporary males that things have changed: "You want it right now baby? Well, I've got to wash my hair./ You know it's my time of the month. Okay! Okay! I'll do what you say./ You're the boss! You're the boss! Now you're the boss/... Watch your step boy—she's the boss."¹⁴

What is of interest in these songs by male songwriters is that each deals with male attitudes, male feelings, and male stereotypes with some sensitivity and honesty, something which rock and roll artists have often been accused of lacking. The evidence of songs discussed in this paper suggests, however, that a wider variety of male attitudes exists than has previously been discussed.

The imbalance of gender studies within popular music is due to an emphasis on sexism rather than on such issues as addressed here. A more comprehensive view of men and women, as perceived through and articulated in popular song lyrics, is long overdue. Studies of sexist language deserve further consideration. Previous studies have tended to stereotype male values and have failed to take into account developing perspectives. Finally, a study which correlates female "message" songs written by men with those written by both female and feminist songwriters (such as Carly Simon, Carole King, Stevie Nicks, Barbara Dane, and Holly Near) would permit a more

accurate assessment of the currency and validity of female values in popular music. We are confronted with the possibility that despite the advancements of the women's movement, men still call the shots in the music industry.

Popular music lyrics are a means by which to explore both male and female cultural attitudes and sexual politics. Freudiger's comment that "popular song lyrics may function as articulations of the problems faced by males and females as they attempt to communicate complex emotions engendered by the love relationship" has been echoed by Cooper, who argues that "through the use of audio resources, students can be encouraged to examine and to compare the multiplicity of behaviors exhibited by men and women in a pluralistic society."¹⁵

Those involved in gender studies should be encouraged to employ popular music in their curricula. Numerous articles and books exist which provide detailed teaching methodologies for so doing.¹⁶ The advantages of using popular music in gender studies curricula have been presented by Cooper, who suggests: "by neglecting the use of non-traditional oral resources, high school and college teachers have failed to tap the enthusiasm and interest which can be aroused by audio materials."¹⁷

For too many years, scholars have relied solely on print resources to explore the issues which gender studies raise. The lyrics of popular music, which surround our lives and the lives of our students, are a potential feast for scholars.

I currently teach a course on popular music at Millikin University. Part historical survey and part thematic approach, the course focuses on blues, folk, and rock songs as primary literary documents. A major thematic focus in the course is the examination of male-female attitudes within popular music lyrics. Experience thus far indicates that student attitudes toward the messages conveyed in lyrics are significantly altered by an examination of those lyrics. Whether student values are actually changed as a result of the class is still unknown.

Scholarship suggests that popular song lyrics, in addition to the myriad of other resources available, offer specialists from numerous disciplines an exciting possibility for engaging in gender studies. Such approaches should help to contribute to our understanding of what it means to be men and women in the modern world.

Notes

1. James Von Schilling, "Popular Music in the College Classroom," *Popular Culture Methods* 10(July, 1981): 14-19.

2. Patricia Freudiger and Elizabeth M. Almquist, "Male and Female Roles in the Lyrics of Three Genres of Contemporary Lyrics," *Sex Roles* 4(February, 1978): 51.

3. B. Lee Cooper, "Women's Studies and Popular Music: Using Audio Resources in Social Studies Instruction," *History and Social Science Teacher* 14(Fall, 1978): 29-37, 40.

4. Littleton, Co.: Libraries Unlimited, 1984.

5. Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1982.

6. Cooper, *The Popular Music Handbook*, 215-217.

7. Ed Marshall, "Venus," (Rambled Publishing Co., Inc., and Lansdale Music Corp., 1959). Recorded by Frankie Avalon, Chancellor 1031. Paul Anka, "Diana," (Management Agency and Music Publishing, and Manitou-Management Music Publishing, 1957). Recorded by Paul Anka, ABC Paramount 3704.

8. For example: George Morton, Jeff Barry, and Ellie Greenwich, "Leader of the Pack," (Unart-Tender Tunes, et al, 1964), recorded by the Shangri-Las, Red Bird 10-014; Florence Green and Luther Dixon, "Soldier Boy," (Ludix Publishing Co., Inc., 1961), recorded by the Shirelles, Scepter 21070; and Brian Holland and Freddy C. Gorman, "Please Mr. Postman," (Jobete Music Co., Inc., 1962), recorded by the Marvelettes, Tamla 54046.

9. Terry Britten and Graham Lyle, "What's Love Got to Do With It?" (Myaxe Music/Good Single Music, 1984). Recorded by Tina Turner, Capitol 12330.

10. Mike Chapman, Nicky Chinn, and Holly Night, "Better Be Good To Me," (Chinnichap Publishing, Inc./Land of Dreams Music, 1984). Recorded by Tina Turner, Capitol 12330.

11. Peter Brown and Robert Rans, "Material Girl," (Minong Publishing, 1984). Recorded by Madonna, Sire Records 25157-1.

12. Joe Jackson, "Real Men," (Albion Music, 1982). Recorded by Joe Jackson, A&M Records SP-4906.

13. Don Henley and Danny Kortchmar, "You're Not Drinking Enough," (Kortchmar Music, 1984). Recorded by Don Henley, Geffen Records 24026.

14. Mick Jagger and Carlos Alomar, "She's The Boss," (Promopub B.V., 1985). Recorded by Mick Jagger, Columbia FC39940.

15. Patricia Freudiger, "Love Lauded and Love Lamented: Men and Women in Popular Music," *Popular Music and Society*, 6(1978), 9. Cooper, "Women's Studies and Popular Music," 30.

16. In addition to Cooper's books, see the following: B. Lee Cooper, "Searching for Personal Identity in the Social Studies: Male and Female Perspectives in Contemporary Lyrics," *International Journal of Instructional Media* 6(1978-79): 351-360; Eric P. Johnson, "The Use of Folk Songs in Education: Some Examples of the Use of Folk Songs in the Teaching of History, Geography, Economics and English Literature," *The Vocational Aspect of Education* 21(Summer, 1969): 89-94; John Kimball, "Music and the Teaching of American History," *Social Education* 27(January, 1963): 23-25; David E. Morse, "Avant Rock in the Classroom," *English Journal* 58(February, 1969): 196-200; Rodney J. Barth, "Popular Culture, The Media, and Teaching English," *English*

Journal 65(March, 1976): 84-88; Richard E. Barbieri, "Resources for the Study of Popular Culture," *English Journal* 65(March 1976): 35-40; William Graebner, "Teaching 'The History of Rock'n'Roll'," *Teaching History* 9(Spring, 1984): 2-20; James R. McDonald, "Rockin' in the Classroom: A Literary Alternative," *International Journal of Instructional Media* 13(1986): 145-158.

17. Cooper, "Women's Studies and Popular Music," 30.

Notes from an Interview With Marion Maxwell Springerville, Arizona, September 4, 1980

James S. Griffith

The White Mountain Orchestra was composed of E. Curtis Maxwell on violin, his brother Frank on guitar, and his daughter Billie and son Marion on guitar and tenor banjo respectively. The Maxwells had lived in the White Mountains (which run through east central Arizona and western New Mexico) since the late 1800s. Music ran in the family, and most Maxwells seemed to be musicians of one sort or another. Curtis could read and write music, and was well known locally as a dance fiddler.

One notable dance took place near Blue, Arizona, shortly after World War I. Blue was, and is, pretty isolated, and a local cattleman gave a dance for his cowboys and others in the area. Three beeves were slaughtered for the barbecue, and liquor was packed in kegs on the backs of burros all the way from Magdalena, New Mexico. Curt Maxwell and another fiddler provided the music, which started Thursday night and continued without much of a let-up until Sunday noon.

During the time when the Maxwells lived in Springerville, Arizona, Curtis would also be asked to play for Mexican weddings. After the church service, the wedding party would form up and march across town to the house where the reception was to take place, with the band playing a "Wedding March" (not the familiar one from *Lohengrin*). Then there would be a big feast followed by a dance. The first dance of the evening would be another march, which Marion remembers was always led by Julius Becker, a local merchant of considerable standing.

By the late 1920s, the Maxwells were living in Central, New Mexico, between Silver City and Deming. The White Mountain Orchestra played regularly in the front parlor of a pool hall in Silver City. According to Marion, who was about twelve years old at the time, Victor scout Ralph Peer invited them to come to El Paso and make records in 1929. Of the tunes they recorded in that session, Marion remembers that they were requested to play "The Old Rye Waltz." Later on, Peer sent for Billie to come back and record some songs. Of these, "Billy Venero" was (and still is) well known in the region. Marion feels that "The Haunted Hunter" was also an old song. "The Cowboy's Wife," on the other hand, was the composition of Mrs. Bernice Murray (I'm not sure of the spelling), a rancher's wife, who was locally known for her poems. Curtis Maxwell had "borrowed this poem from Mrs. Murray and then set the music to the words."

After the sessions, the Maxwells kept the band going until, in Marion's words, "it finally faded out." After

Curtis died in 1944, Marion organized his own dance band, which played during the 1950s. It consisted of violin (played by Marion), piano, guitar, and drums, and played mostly contemporary country hits. Hank Williams, Lefty Frizzell, and Webb Pierce were mentioned as song sources for the group. Also, as Mr. Maxwell says: "Once in a while we'd have a schottische or a Paul Jones or something to kind of liven them up a little." Later on the group became known as the Maxwell Brothers as his sons joined him. They played for dances all over the Arizona White Mountains. This group, too, "faded out" as the younger Maxwells moved away, and Marion finally retired from music a few years ago when his hearing began to go out on him.

He can still play the fiddle, though, and allowed me to tape his father's "Escudilla Waltz," a couple of breakdowns, a Mexican polka, and a schottische of his own composition, as well as the two tunes for "Put Your Little Foot" and the "Wedding March" that he had learned from his father. One of the breakdowns he played was "Devil's Dream," which he remembers his father and other old timers calling "Satan's Vision of Heaven." Like his father, he prefers to play with accompaniment, recalling that Curtis Maxwell frequently told him that "playing the violin alone without somebody helping you is like pulling a wagon with one wheel gone."



Marion Maxwell

Book Reviews

The Reference Shelf: A Review Essay

Norm Cohen

Sound recordings, like books, can generate reference works. Today that seems an obvious proposition. Yet, two decades ago, apart from some jazz and blues discographies and a few other volumes, there were very few reference works that devoted a significant fraction—let alone all—of their pages to recordings of vernacular (i.e., not “art” or “classical”) music.

In recent years there has been a veritable flood of just such books—enough to justify a bibliography of recorded sound reference volumes. There are various kinds: general listings of recordings—e.g., all of those that appeared on one of the several popularity charts published by different trade journals; and lists of all the recordings of a particular artist, a particular genre, or a particular company. All of these types of compilations are represented in the following review of recently published reference works in the area of folk and popular music.

It is interesting to note that there are still rather few references that give equal weight to the published as well as the recorded music of a particular kind. In some fields this still makes sense. A Johnny Cash discography can be justifiably separate from a Johnny Cash bibliography. But some of the works reviewed below raise questions about their focus. Why, for example, should Shapiro’s *Popular Music* not have listed label and release numbers for important recordings of the songs cited in his extensive compilations? Why does Havlice’s *Popular Music Index* not include citations to recorded sources as well as published ones? And why does *Folk Music in America: A Reference Guide* not include discographic citations as well as bibliographic ones? There is no compelling reason in any case. Doubtless the interests of the compiler and the resources at his or her disposal, more than anything else, dictated the nature of the work.

It is tempting to speculate, further, that one other fact has contributed greatly to our different treatment of published and recorded materials: namely, that records have numbers assigned to them when they are issued, while books (prior to the use of ISBNs, at any rate) do not. Therefore the one naturally suggests numerical listings; the other doesn’t. One begs for serial listings that can be quickly scanned for completeness; the other doesn’t. Even sheet music—perhaps a better analog to recordings than books—does not have release numbers, and consequently is not treated with the same numerical precision as records. (Whether sheet music will even continue to be an

important music source in the field of vernacular music is doubtful at present.)

Ten of the thirteen works discussed below are devoted exclusively or principally to recordings per se. The survey concludes with three reference works of a more traditional kind that deal principally with published, rather than recorded, music.

The Cash Box Black Contemporary Singles Charts, 1960-1984. Compiled by George Albert and Frank Hoffman, with the assistance of Lee Ann Hoffman. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1986. ISBN 0-8108-1853-1. Pp. iv + 704. \$42.50, clothcovers. **The Cash Box Album Charts, 1975-1985.** Compiled by Frank Hoffman and George Albert, with the assistance of Lee Ann Hoffman. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987. ISBN 0-8108-1939-2. Pp. x + 546. \$45.00, clothcovers.

These volumes follow the format of two similar predecessors by the same compilers: *The Cash Box Country Singles Charts, 1958-1982*, and *The Cash Box Singles Charts, 1950-1981*. Like their predecessors, each includes an artist and a song (or album) title index. The former lists artists alphabetically, with a chronological list of song hits under each artist’s (or group’s) name. Along with the title is the date of the first appearance on the charts, record label and release number, chart progress (a sequence of numbers indicating the weekly position on the charts), and number indicating the total number of weeks on the charts. The indexes list each title and give the recording artist’s name.

As the compilers state in their introduction, the primary purpose of these works, like their predecessors, is to make available the “wealth of data” contained in *Cash Box*’s charts: in the first case, black contemporary music singles charts over a twenty-four year period; in the second, the album charts over an eleven year period. The albums are not genre specific, and therefore include pop, rock, country, and rhythm and blues.

The introductory remarks to the black singles book sketch the evolution of the black contemporary singles charts from their inception in 1960, noting changes in the number of entries, titling, and in manner of dealing with different versions of the same song.

Cash Box’s album chart initially included listings of the top 175 albums, but soon was expanded to include 200. Thus, it was not especially noteworthy for an album to

remain on the charts for a year or longer. An appendix lists the albums with the longest runs on the charts (the top position goes to *Van Halen*, on the charts for 186 weeks). Another appendix lists chronologically the number one records. Other appendixes list: the artists with the largest number of chart hits; those with the most number one albums; albums with the longest runs at the number one position; and artists with the most weeks at number one. A parallel set of appendixes is included in the black singles volume.

Not surprisingly, questions relating to the significance of the charts are not addressed. How do these charts compare with those of *Billboard* or *Record World*? Consider Roberta Flack's 1974 hit, "Feel Like Making Love" (Atlantic 3025). It entered *Cash Box*'s top ten at position nine on 27 July, then hit five, two, one, four, four, and five on the next six weeks' charts. On *Record World*'s black singles charts it hit the top ten on 3 August at number one. In the following weeks it was at one, three, eight, and eight, leaving the top ten on 7 September. Or compare Gladys Knight's "I've Got to Use My Imagination"; it was *Record World*'s number one on 5 January 1974, but never got higher than number three on *Cash Box*'s charts. (The *Record World* data are taken from the compilation by Nelson George, reviewed immediately following.)

What such comparisons should prompt is an inquiry into the different methods used by the different organizations to arrive at their chart listings. How do they weight radio play? store sales? other factors? Do particular regions have a greater influence on the listings? Do particular chain stores or other retailers? Do record clubs, or juke boxes, have some impact? When we are told the answers to these questions, we will be better able to answer questions scholars have concerning the significance of the chart listings.

Top of the Charts: The Most Complete Listing Ever. By Nelson George. Piscataway, NJ: New Century, 1983. ISBN 0-8329-0260-8. Pp. viii + 470, photos. \$15.95, papercovers.

The preceding two volumes are based on the charts published in *Cash Box*; this reference uses the *Record World* charts for its source. The main listing is a week-by-week compilation of the top ten singles and albums in each of several categories: rock, black, jazz, and country, from the first week of 1970 through the end of 1981. Each entry includes title and artist, as given in the original charts. Each year's listing is preceded by an introduction of one or two pages giving an overview of the musical highlights of the year. My comments about the preceding two volumes—with regard to lack of any information on how chart listings were originally compiled—apply here as well. This is another volume of raw data without analysis. Much could be done with the material.

Rock Record: A Collectors' Directory of Rock Albums and Musicians, 3rd ed. By Terry Hounscome. New York: Facts on File, 1987. ISBN 0-8160-1754-9. Pp. xii + 738 pp. \$14.95, papercovers.

This compilation consists of an extensive alphabetical listing of rock and other musicians and the LP albums that they have produced. According to the introduction, some 7,700 artists or groups are included, with listings for over 45,000 albums—both currently available and out-of-print. Singles and bootleg albums are excluded, according to the Introduction, but there are some EPs listed. For each listing, album title, year of issue, label and catalog number, and country of origin are included, as well as the names of musicians appearing on each album and their instruments. An alphabetical artist index follows, with references not only to each album's main artists, but also all the supporting musicians.

The scope is primarily rock music, but there are many pop, soul, novelty, reggae, country, blues, and (commercial) folk artists as well. This extension of boundaries poses problems of completeness in these peripheral fields. For example, there is a listing for the bluegrass group Country Gazette, but not for the Country Gentlemen, which is arguably a more popular and influential band within the genre. There is also the question of completeness of listings, especially for the non-rock artists. There is, for instance, only one Doc & Merle Watson album included—a U.K. release.

Million Selling Records From the 1900s to the 1980s: An Illustrated Directory. By Joseph Murrells. New York: Arco, 1984. ISBN 0-668-06461-7. Pp. 530, photos. \$19.95, papercovers.

This, the third of Murrells's compilations of "million selling discs" is basically an updated version of his 1978 work, *The Book of Golden Discs*, differing principally in the added six years' coverage, some changes in the photographs, and the deletion of several useful tables at the end of the listing. Front matter includes a table of the dollar value of record and tape sales in the United States for each fifth year from 1920 through 1980; definitions of silver/gold/platinum record awards in different countries; and a list of Country Music Hall of Fame electees from 1961 through 1983. The main text is a year-by-year listing of purported million sellers from 1903 through 1980, with brief background on each entry—either the song/album or the artist, or both. Appendixes list without comment the million sellers in 1981-83. These are followed by title and artist indexes.

Tables of chart statistics that were in the 1978 edition but omitted from this one include: longest duration on bestsellers charts, in order of number of weeks; longest

duration at position number one; artists with most singles at number one; number of million sellers each year; artists with most million selling discs; best selling albums; and lists of half-million sellers. Their absence is regrettable.

My only complaint—which I have voiced before—is the attribution of million plus sales to records of the acoustic era which could not possibly have sold that well. For example, Murrells continues to perpetuate the myth that Vernon Dalhart's "Prisoner's Song/Wreck of the Old 97" (Victor 19427) sold six to seven million, when the best available data—the figures presented in the courtroom when authorship of "Old 97" was contested—indicated sales of slightly over one million. Given this recalibration of early record sales, it taxes credulity excessively to believe that Fiddlin' John Carson's "You Will Never Miss Your Mother Until She Is Gone" or "Old Joe Clark," both 1923 Okeh releases, were million sellers. Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman's 1924 Okeh recording of "The Sinking of the *Titanic*" is likewise labelled a million seller—an equally improbable assertion.

The table of dollar value of record sales replaces a graph in the 1978 edition that gave (though with less precision) the figures for every year. A more precise version of that graph would show that sales between 1932 and 1936 were \$11 million or less each year; a million seller (at seventy-five cents each—or even thirty-five cents during the Depression's worst years on some labels) would have constituted some five to ten percent of the year's sales. (Even in those years, half of the sales of a typical record occurred within the first year of release.) Thus my disbelief that Gid Tanner's 1934 release, "Down Yonder," sold four million; or that Patsy Montana's 1936 release, "I Want to be a Cowboy's Sweetheart," sold a million.

Such cavils aside, this is a useful reference—with far more information than simply a listing of the 3,000-plus million sellers between 1903 and 1983.

The King Labels: A Discography. Compiled by Michel Ruppli. Discographies, no.18. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985. 2 vols. ISBN 0-313-24771-4. Pp. xvii + 899. \$95.00, clothcovers.

This pair of volumes lists all recordings made or issued by King Records and its subsidiary labels between 1943 and 1973. Volume one lists chronologically by session date all sessions using the original King masters, giving master numbers, release labels and numbers, titles, personnel, and instrumentation. Sessions for the De Luxe, Federal, and Bethlehem labels are given in volume two, followed by other small label recordings distributed by King. This volume also contains numerical listings for each record label, both singles and albums, cross-referenced by the page number on which each title is listed

in the chronological listings; foreign issues; and an artist index.

Prose material is scant, consisting only of appropriate acknowledgements, lists of abbreviations, introductory explanations, and a brief one-page outline of the history of the King family of labels. (For example, there is no mention of the fact that the first two recordings for the label, credited to the Shepherd Brothers, were actually by Merle Travis and Grandpa Jones.) This front matter is duplicated in both volumes.

The work has been photo-offset from a typed original, which sometimes appears rather light on the page. The spacing also leaves much to be desired—e.g., spaces are omitted after commas. Both of these shortcomings contribute to making the book difficult to read. Nevertheless, the necessary data are included, making this compilation an important addition to any music archive or library. The price reflects the expectation that the market for the book will be confined largely to institutions, an expectation that is self-fulfilling.

The Johnny Cash Discography. Compiled by John L. Smith. Discographies, no.13. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985. ISBN 0-313-24654-8. Pp. xxi + 205, photos., indexes. \$29.95, clothcovers.

An outgrowth of Smith's 1969 discography published by JEMF (Special Series, no.2, with numerous subsequent updates in *JEMFQ*), this revised and expanded publication is a complete listing of all of Cash's recordings through April 1984. The main body consists of a chronological session-by-session listing of recordings, beginning with his late 1954 sessions for the Sun Record Company. For each session, personnel, master numbers, release numbers, titles, and composer credits are given. The format differs slightly from the standard discography layout, with the release numbers listed in two groups (singles and EPs, then LPs), one beneath the other, at the left of the page. The release listing is not comprehensive: Smith states that European release numbers are given only when there was no domestic release. Also included with the studio sessions are live recordings made at concerts, and overdub sessions. This 121-page listing is followed by indexes of United States releases, of European releases, and of bootleg releases (each index divided into singles, then albums, arranged by record label); an index of ABC television programs, with musical numbers for each; and an alphabetical song title index, keyed to the session recording date. Also included are a songbook bibliography, and a very brief general bibliography.

Thank You Music Lovers: A Bio-Discography of Spike Jones and His City Slickers, 1941-1965. Compiled by Jack Mirtle. Discographies, no. 20. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986. ISBN 0-313-24814-1. Pp. xx + 420, photos. \$55.00, clothcovers.

The heart of this labor of love is a 342-page compilation of data regarding all of the City Slickers's recordings, playdates, radio and television shows during a twenty-five year period—including the usual discographic details regarding recordings, and personnel and title listing for the other kinds of musical performances. All of this is supplemented by background information, "trivia," quotations from contemporary newspaper and journal accounts, excerpts from publicity blurbs, and reminiscences of musicians and colleagues. For example, information accompanying the listing of the May, 1949, session at which the City Slickers recorded their parody of Vaughn Monroe's hit, "(Ghost) Riders in the Sky," includes a discussion of the original ending, which included a more direct dig at Monroe, the discussion among executives about whether or not this could be released, the arrangements for re-mastering the recording without this ending, the publicity regarding the "feud" between Monroe and Jones, etc.

Also included in the book are a twenty-two page biography, with selected recordings and radio appearances, from Jones's early years (1911-1941); appendixes listing unfinished and undated projects, unreleased titles, souvenirs, and spin-off recordings; a listing of domestic and foreign LP releases; a listing of V-discs, government and Armed Forces Radio Service transcriptions; a personnel index; index to personalities and shows; and an index to song/tune titles. The entire contents are photo-offset from a typed original.

The Essential Jazz Records: Vol. I—Ragtime to Swing. By Max Harrison, Charles Fox, and Eric Thacker. Discographies, no. 12. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984. ISBN 0-313-24674-2. Pp. xii + 595, photos, indexes, bibliography. \$39.95 clothcovers.

The three British authors, all frequent contributors to jazz and other music periodicals, have assembled slightly over 250 albums of jazz music, most of which are collections of material originally issued on 78 rpm discs. The scope is international, with Western Europe, Japan, and the United States all well-represented. Furthermore, many albums are the products of small, independent labels. Thus many albums will be difficult to obtain for would-be purchasers in any country—even disregarding the question of whether or not all the albums are still in print, a problem the authors have not addressed in their preface.

The main listing is divided into eight chapters: (1)

origins—Afro-American background, ragtime, proto-jazz, and early New Orleans style; (2) the '20s—variations on the New Orleans style; (3) the '20s—styles other than New Orleans; (4) jazz in Europe; (5) a brief section of the influence of jazz on European (classical) composers; (6) the '30s and swing; (7) traditional survivals and revivals; and (8) the transition to modern jazz. A projected second volume will take up where this one leaves off.

For each album under discussion, essential discographic data are given, including personnel, recording dates and locations, and titles of selections. This information is followed by a careful review of the album—generally between one and two pages in length. The comments, well-written, entertaining, and informative, pertain not only to the esthetics of the music itself but also to the importance of the musicians in the history of jazz. Although the prefatory comments insist the book is a collection of reviews and not a history of jazz, its usefulness in the latter role should not be overlooked. The book also includes a five page bibliography, and indexes of LP titles, tune titles, and musicians and other persons mentioned in the text.

The Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings. Matrix Series: 1 through 4999; The Victor Talking Machine Company, 24 April 1903 to 7 January 1908. Compiled by Ted Fagan and William R. Moran. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986. ISBN 0-313-25320-X. Pp. liv + 648, photos. \$65.00, clothcovers.

In the last issue of *JEMFQ* I reviewed with great satisfaction and acclaim the first volume in Messrs. Fagan and Moran's projected multi-volume publication documenting the recordings of the Victor/RCA organization from inception to 1950. The first volume covered recordings from 1900 to 1903—all those recorded before the introduction of the master numbering system. This volume carries the work forward to 1908. The date, however, is misleading, because of Victor's practice of assigning the same master number to successive recordings—or takes—of the same title by the same artist even if made years later. For example, Cal Stewart (Uncle Josh) recorded "Uncle Josh's Second Visit to the Metropolis" first on 12 December 1906, when masters B-4132-1 and B-4132-2 were made; but B-4132-5 and -6 were not recorded until 30 July 1919.

Front matter in this volume consists of the usual acknowledgements and other notices, as well as some highly interesting and informative material on the history and policies of the Victor company as they apply to matters at hand. Thus, the introduction includes background on the conception and birth of this project; on the matrix numbering system itself; on catalog numbering practices;

on the physical characteristics of Victor recordings (with illustrations of seventeen labels), including location and nature of catalog, matrix, take, and stamper numbers, remake, dubbing, and other identifying markings; and an extensive discussion of turntable speed. The reader is patiently walked through a fabricated sample entry so he/she can understand the format of the main listing, the 310-page "Listing of Domestic Matrix Series Recordings: Numbers 1 through 4999."

Each entry includes matrix number, title, artist, accompaniment, and composer/lyricist credit; cross references to other master numbers of the same title by the same artist; recording dates for each take and the release numbers, if any, on which each take appeared; and correct playing speed (as determined by Moran). Supplementary information for many recordings is given in twenty-eight pages of notes at the end of the listing—sometimes consisting of extensive anecdotes (mostly for operatic recordings) that liven up a discography beyond most readers' dreams. There follows a 181-page "Chronological Listing of Domestic Recording Sessions," giving master and take number and artist's name for each recording made on a particular day, from October 1902 to June 1930—when Schumann-Heink recorded takes three and four of master CVE-2980. This is followed by twenty-three pages of sketchily documented "overseas" recordings—mostly made in Mexico and Latin America in 1905-07. Next, an artist index gives in numerical order all the master numbers for each artist, listed alphabetically. The volume concludes with a title index.

From the artist index, we see that Victor's most prolific artists in this period were, in order of number of master recordings, Arthur Pryor's Band (485), Harry MacDonough (336), Sousa's Band (285), the Haydn (or Hayden) Quartet (250), Billy Murray (180), the anonymous Victor Orchestra (168) (a promised general note that is supposed to discuss orchestras and bands continues to elude me), Byron Harlan (159), Arthur Collins (147), and Len Spencer (104). These nine names appear on over forty percent of the 4,999 masters.

It is difficult to find anything non-trivial to complain about in this volume. Possibly one might have wanted the compilers to add the figures on record sales from Victor's ledgers (information that would interest many readers as much as the correct turntable speeds), but Victor would probably have objected to their publication. Perhaps initial release dates could have been added. While the listings themselves have been proofread carefully and seem nearly error-free, the same cannot be said for other prose portions of the book—in particular, the endnotes and headnotes. The one page headnote to the "Overseas Recordings" alone contains four typographic or orthographic errors.

As of this writing, the future of the Victor Discography

project is uncertain because of the recent unfortunate death of Ted Fagan. There are capable people who could step in, but whether it can be done without breaking stride drastically remains to be seen. When the second volume went to press, plans then called for the third volume to consist of a complete catalog number listing covering the entire acoustic period (1900-25). Most readers of this journal would probably be much more interested in that part of the project; but there is so much important discographic information in the first two volumes as well that anyone seriously interested in early recordings can ill afford to pass them by.

An Index of Selected Folk Recordings. By Beverly B. Boggs and Daniel W. Patterson. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Curriculum in Folklore, University of North Carolina, 1984. Set of 55 microfiche (10,864 pp), with a printed manual (Pp. xii + 75). \$25.00. [Available from Curriculum in Folklore, 228 Greenlaw Hall 066A, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.]

In 1981 Patterson and Boggs began what was to be a two-year project, undertaken with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, for the preparation of an index of selected "sound recordings of traditional music and speech from the United States and related countries." The data-base consisted of 500 selected recordings, mostly 12" LP discs, holding some 8,350 performances. The index is, as the authors assert in their preface, "the most extensive and the most detailed indexing yet attempted for published recordings of British and American traditional music." The 500 were selected from the University of North Carolina's collection of over 2,300 albums on the bases of strength of performances, historical and cultural importance, and strength of documentation.

The fiche are divided into several sections, as follows:

(1) Master List (12 fiche). This index includes an entry for each album and for each item (performance of a song, tune, speech, etc.) in the database. For each album, the entry includes: album title, label name, release number and matrix number; editors and/or collectors; performers; date and place of publication; physical description of album (size, speed, etc.); and notes on documentation, annotation, etc. For each item, the entry includes: the source album title/label/number; data on the performer(s) (name, birthdate and place, gender, marital status, profession); and information on the item (alternate titles, bibliographic references, historical notations, subject keywords, nature of instrumental accompaniment, if any).

From this master list, several cross index lists were prepared:

(2) Album Title Entries (2 fiche). For each entry is given most of the information given for the album in the Master List, as well as a full list of selections.

(3) Title and Key Line Entries (8 fiche). For each entry is given the album source, the performer(s), accompaniment, subject keywords, and first line of text.

(4) Performer Entries (7 fiche). An entry is included for each performance by each performer, repeating the biographical details of the performer and certain descriptives for the performance.

(5) Geographic Entries (8 fiche). Essentially a geographic index to the performances, again repeating the biographical details for each performer and certain descriptive data for each performance.

(6) Subject Entries. Subject indexes are divided into Instrumental Music (2 fiche), Speech (1 fiche), and Vocal Music (15 fiche). Within these subdivisions are several hundred categories and subcategories, such as: banjo songs; ballads—trainwrecks; calendar customs; chants; dance—waltzes; deceptions (as subject); farewells; religious—Bible tales; Welsh—songs in. The brochure accompanying the microfiche includes a complete thesaurus (requiring some fifty printed pages) to the terms used in the indexes. Considerable thought went into the selection of the subject keywords, and much of the potential utility of the index results from the exhaustive nature of the keyword listing.

A mere listing of the contents of 500 albums is not a spectacular achievement; but this project is a meticulous and intensive cross indexing system that provides a model difficult to improve upon. The utility of this particular index can of itself be considerable; however, the real need is for an index to ten times this many folk music albums. Boggs and Patterson have laboriously established the procedure for preparing a comprehensive index; we need to find the team to carry out the extension of this work (I'm not sure that they themselves would be eager) and, equally important, convince a funding agency or private philanthropist of the value of such a time-consuming project.

Popular Music, 1920-1979: A Revised Cumulation. Edited by Nat Shapiro and Bruce Pollock. Detroit: Gale Research, 1985. 3 vols. ISBN 0-8103-0847-9. Pp. 2,827, indexes. \$225, clothcovers.

In this review of various types of bibliographic and discographic resources, several different approaches to indexing song data have been discussed: individual artist discographies, company discographies, genre discographies, indexes of songs in published collections or in collections of sound recordings; and compilations of top hits from trade charts.

The three-volume compendium at hand takes a different approach; its aim is to present the vital statistics on over 18,000 "significant" songs of the period 1920-79: copyright dates, current publishers, composers and lyricists, and best-selling recordings, with artist, record label, and year for the latter. Other data include notes if the song was introduced in a film, if it was adapted from an older work, if it won any awards or nominations, if it was anyone's theme song, and so on.

The set is a much welcome revision of an earlier series of works by Shapiro, in which he provided decade-by-decade (or pentade-by-pentade) compilations of the best popular music of the period. Those volumes covered in succession the periods 1920-29, 1930-39, 1940-49, 1950-59, 1960-64, 1965-69, 1970-74, and 1975-79. The last volume of the series, 1980-84, is not included in this revision. In that earlier series, songs were listed by year of publication; the present compilation is one immense alphabetical list. Thus, for some purposes the new edition does not superannuate the older volumes, which can be useful for year-by-year song searches.

The set opens with a series of introductory essays, one for each of the periods of the original series of volumes. The first six were written by Shapiro before his death; the last two, by Pollock for this edition. The song listing itself begins on p. 79 and continues through p. 2,164. It is followed by a lyricists and composers index; an "Important Performances" index (whether album, movie, musical, opera, operetta, orchestra, play, radio show, revue, or television show); an awards index; and a list of publishers.

Important considerations in judging such a work are: what the criteria for selection were; whether those are useful criteria; and the degree to which those criteria are met. Shapiro originally stated that the series "documents those musical works that (1) achieved a substantial degree of popular acceptance, (2) were exposed to the public in especially notable circumstances, or (3) were accepted and given important performances by influential musical and dramatic artists." (p. 11) The first criterion would make the charts the principal determinant for inclusion; the latter two would allow for other items on less precisely defined grounds.

It is always difficult to make an objective evaluation of coverage—whether indeed the 18,000 most important songs of the six decades were all included. To make some spot checks, I took 100 entries from each of the following three references and counted how many appeared in *Popular Music*, Joel Whitburn's *Top Rhythm & Blues Records 1949-1971*, his *Top Country & Western Records 1949-1971*, and *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Hits, 1955 to Present*, also compiled by Whitburn. In the latter case, I excluded songs from 1980 or later from the comparison. I found that 45/100 of the R&B recordings were not included in *Popular Music*, 64/100 of the C&W were not, and

22/100 of the pop Top 40 were not. (In a few instances, the song was included, but a different recording was cited.) Of course, there may have been some errors; sometimes trade charts do not list titles exactly, which might have moved them to different parts of the alphabet where they would have escaped my census. (When I reviewed the 1930-39 volume of the original series in *JEMFQ*, I complained that it had omitted "Silver Haired Daddy of Mine"—one of the most important C&W songs of the decade. Shapiro shortly wrote me and pointed out that the song was listed under its correct title, "*That Silver Haired Daddy of Mine*.") Of course we would expect many omissions from the three volumes in question: the first two each list some 13,000 recordings, and the third, approximately 7,000 recordings. For *Popular Music* to include all of these it would have to have been four times its present size. In most cases, the omitted songs were not high achievers on the charts, but there were even cases of number one songs being left out.

These comparisons notwithstanding, the set will be essential to any music reference library. As is the case with so many reference books of recent years, the price will ensure that it will be found almost exclusively in institutional collections, and in few personal libraries.

Folk Music in America: A Reference Guide. By Terry E. Miller. New York: Garland, 1986. ISBN 0-8240-8935-0. Pp. xx + 424. \$40.00, clothcovers.

In 1951 Charles Haywood published the first comprehensive bibliography of American folklore and folksong—at a price (\$27.50) that the author considered exorbitant, and in a quantity (1500) that was soon exhausted. A dozen years later, a considerably expanded second edition appeared—including some 40,000 entries. The last three decades have seen so much folksong scholarship, and changes in directions in that scholarship, that Haywood's monumental bibliography has become outdated for many purposes. Many instructors, institutions, and scholars have compiled and distributed xerographically-reproduced bibliographies covering various aspects of folksong, and several monographic studies have been published that include extensive bibliographies that can serve as good starting points for further work. But a single comprehensive bibliography has not appeared.

Terry E. Miller, Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology and Associate Director of the Center for the Study of World Musics at Kent State University, has tried to fill the gap with the volume under review. The *Guide* is divided into nine sections: (1) general resources (130 entries); (2) music of the American Indians and Eskimos (228); (3) Anglo-American folk songs and ballads (445); (4) later developments in Anglo-American folk music (190); (5)

traditional instruments and instrumental music (152); (6) American psalmody and hymnody (107); (7) the singing school and shape-note tradition (179); (8) Afro-American music (305); and (9) musics of various ethnic traditions (191). Each section opens with an introductory essay and is subdivided into smaller units. Each entry includes appropriate bibliographic data and a brief (in some cases, somewhat extended) annotation. Generally these annotations are good precis of the entries cited. Coverage includes books and scholarly journal articles, as well as a few articles from popular periodicals. A few book reviews are cited, as are three or four record jacket/brochure notes. The main listing is followed by author and subject indexes. Some doctoral dissertations are cited, but not masters' theses—on the reasonable grounds of inaccessibility.

As noted above, Miller is an ethnomusicologist, and has approached his task from that perspective. He frequently notes his own surprise at the number of studies of "folk music" that deal little at all with *music per se*, focusing rather on the texts or social context. Consequently, coverage of articles with an ethnomusicological orientation is somewhat better than those with the usual folkloristic or folk musicological perspectives.

A few inconsistencies strike the reader. Although there are 1,927 numbered entries, the number of different works cited is smaller: several works are cited in more than one sub-section—invariably with slightly different annotations and no cross-references, leaving the reader to wonder whether the compiler was aware of what he had done. In other cases, works that could well have been cited in more than one place are not—and sometimes are not cited in the most obvious section. Robert M. W. Dixon & John Godrich's *Blues & Gospel Records, 1902-1943*, for instance, is cited in the Afro-American chapter in the sub-section on blues but not in the sub-section on bibliographies and discographies. Collections of essays are treated inconsistently: sometimes an entire volume is cited with allusions only to some of the contents; other times individual articles are cited without reference to the full volume. There are instances of one citation on a given topic but not a more obvious one. Loyal Jones's article in *JEMFQ* on Bascom Lunsford is cited, but his book-length study is not. Only one book on the subject of ragtime, out of the several excellent ones available, is cited. Sigmund Spaeth's *Read 'Em and Weep* is entered, but not his companion volume, *Weep Some More, My Lady*.

As for the question of overall coverage, it is difficult to make any general quantitative evaluation. Most knowledgeable readers can find omissions in any section they care to examine closely. The sub-section on individual ballad (and song) studies contains only twenty-three entries out of over 400 that could have been included. Another suggestive statistic is that of the 148 entries in

Haywood's subsection of folksong titled "general studies," only seventeen appear in Miller's book. On the other hand, I found many references with which I was not familiar.

I would have suggested several editorial policies to avoid some of these pitfalls. Probably foreign-language sources should have been excluded, as should phonograph album notes. There are many important resources on the backs of album jackets or in their brochures, and to list only three or four opens the bibliography to unnecessary criticism. Space and effort could have been conserved by extensive use of cross-referencing, rather than citing independently the same item in more than one place. In the case of books that consist of collections of individual articles, both the full volume and the individual contributions should have been cited, with cross-references back and forth. An index to periodicals cited would have been of great value and could have been accomplished with minimal effort by more resourceful use of the word processor.

Notwithstanding my several criticisms, I am grateful to Miller for providing students of folk music with this valuable resource. It will certainly make many research tasks considerably easier; no library will want to be without it.

Popular Song Index. By Patricia Pate Havlice. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1975. ISBN 0-8108-0820-X. Pp. vi + 933. \$55.00 [in 1987; \$42.50 when published].

Popular Song Index, First Supplement. Havlice. Scarecrow, 1978. ISBN 0-8108-1099-0. Pp. iii + 386. \$30.00 [in 1987; \$22.50 when published].

Popular Song Index, Second Supplement. Havlice. Scarecrow, 1984. ISBN 0-8108-1642-3. Pp. iv + 530. \$35.00. All clothcovers.

I imagine every music librarian in a public library has longed for a catalog of all the songs in all the songbooks in his/her library's collection; I myself have coveted that type of bibliographic aid at those occasional moments when the excitement of the search was outweighed by the pressures of time. Such an index, in order to avoid sheer cumbersomeness, would need to be divided into several subsections—probably separate volumes, if we are talking about old-fashioned books, rather than the relatively newer forms such as computer discs or microforms. I would at least try to divide the volumes by some more imaginative principle than alphabetical sequence; perhaps folk music in one volume, country in another, blues and other Afro-American in a third, foreign language in a fourth, pop song in a fifth, and so on. This approach would of course lead to some headaches, but most books would fall reasonably neatly into one category or another. Each song should be entered by title, first line, first line of chorus, if any, and, ideally, by cross references to other

versions of the same song in the case of folksongs. Composed songs should have composer/lyricist indexes. One might argue whether an index of musical phrases should be part of such a bibliography, but I would assert that a musical index constitutes a separate project and can be treated discretely.

Some researchers have carried this aspiration farther than I have. At hand are three volumes compiled by Patricia Havlice, a former reference librarian who has written several bibliographic aids, including *World Painting Index*, *Index to Literary Biography*, *Index to American Author Bibliographies*, and *Index to Artistic Biography*. The main volume indexes the contents of 301 songbooks published between 1940 and 1972, some of which are reissues of older publications. I estimate that some 35,000 title and/or first line entries are listed in the 828 pages of Part 2. Part 1 includes the bibliographic data for the 301 collections indexed. Part 3 is a composer/lyricist index, giving the song titles for each of the approximately 6,000 entries. The publisher's blurb states that Havlice's work complements earlier song bibliographies: *Song Index: An Index to More than 12,000 Songs in 177 Song Collections Comprising 262 Volumes* and its *Supplement*, edited by Minnie Earl Sears and republished in one combined volume by Shoe String Press in 1966; and *Songs in Collections: An Index*, compiled by Desiree de Charms and Paul F. Breed and published by Information Service, Inc., in 1966. The first of Havlice's two Supplements indexes 72 books published between 1970 and 1975; the second indexes 156 collections published between 1976 and 1981—together, some 30,000 title and/or first line entries are included.

Each entry in the title/first line section gives both, as well as the books, cited by a number keyed to the bibliography. A representative entry is:

'I Got Stripes' Johnny Cash and Charlie Williams. FL: On a Monday I was arrested FLC: I got stripes around my shoulders. 39.

Here, "FL" and "FLC" refer to first line of verse and first line of chorus, respectively, The "39" refers to the book, *Songs of Johnny Cash*, numbered 39 in the bibliography.

While the three volumes thus represent an index to an enormous library of 529 song collections, there are many drawbacks to this monumental effort. The first has already been hinted at in my opening remarks. The collections indexed are a veritable hodge-podge of volumes—likely to be found only in a large music library and not in an individual's private collection. Of the songbooks indexed in Havlice's first volume, nineteen are obviously collections of songs (mostly folksongs) in foreign languages, including Chinese, French, Japanese, and Yiddish. Another handful are international collections. Twenty-two are entirely pop songs, including collections of works by Burt Bacharach, Bob Dylan, Stephen Foster, Gilbert

and Sullivan, and George and Ira Gershwin. Havlice's title notwithstanding, the remainder—and bulk—of the collections are of folksongs—but varying from primary collections such as those of Cecil Sharp and Vance Randolph to popularized singing collections edited by Margaret Boni, Oscar Brand, and others. Additionally, even among the folksong collections there are some oddities. For example, only two of the four volumes of Helen Hartness Flanders's *Ancient Ballads Traditionally Sung in New England* are indexed; similarly, the First Supplement cites only one of the four volumes of Bertrand Bronson's *Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*.

The second and third volumes suffer from the same lack of focus—as is true, incidentally, of Sears's and De Charms & Breed's bibliographies also. They are, alas, compendia designed for music reference librarians—and, in fact, all were compiled by librarians, not musicologists. Thus, they do not provide cross-references to alternate texts. For example, on p. 807 of Havlice's first volume, the entry for "Word is to the kitchen gone" notes, "see 'Mary Hamilton'." Two entries further, for "Word's gone to the kitchen," the reader is instructed to "see 'The Four Marys'." Nowhere is there an indication that these are both versions of the same ballad, with different titles and with slightly different lyrics. Similarly, on p. 828 are two entries for the same Yiddish song:

'Zog Nit Keynmol! FL: Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg. 236, 237.

And:

'Zog nit keynmol az du gayst dem letzten veg' see 'Partizaner Hymne.'

The entry for the latter title refers to another collection, and does not refer to nos. 236 and 237.

Music reference librarians, then, will find these three volumes indispensable if they cater to patrons seeking texts to songs of various pedigrees. Private collectors may hesitate before exchanging \$120 for the series—especially if they focus on a particular genre (folk music, pop song, etc). I must note that there is a better folk song finding index: Florence E. Brunnings's *Folk Song Index: A Comprehensive Guide to the Florence E. Brunnings Collection* (Garland, 1981), which indexes over 50,000 titles in over 1,000 folk song collections and 800 folk music sound recordings. However, it, too, is not without some faults (see my review in JEMFQ 62, [Summer 1981]: 109).

Other Reviews

The Popular Music Handbook: A Resource Guide for Teachers, Librarians and Music Specialists. By B. Lee Cooper. Littleton, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, 1984. ISBN 0-87287-393-5. Pp. xxvi + 415, indexes. \$37.50, clothcovers. **A Resource Guide to Themes in Contemporary American Song Lyrics, 1950-1985.** By B. Lee Cooper. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986. ISBN 0-313-24516-9. Pp. xxiv + 458, discography, bibliography, indexes. \$49.95, clothcovers.

B. Lee Cooper is a frequently published advocate of the incorporation of the study of popular music into general curricula. These two books are intended to facilitate many types of popular music studies: the study of popular music in and of itself, as art; the study of what popular music indicates about changes in American society over the past thirty years; and the study of popular music as an integral part of broad social studies programs.

The Popular Music Handbook, subtitled *A Resource Guide for Teachers, Librarians, and Media Specialists*, is divided into four major sections. The first, "Popular Music in the Classroom," provides two sections meant to assist teachers in developing "record-related instructional strategies." The first of these two sections presents twenty-eight "recommended teaching topics," all examples of contemporary social issues or topics, such as "Biographical Study," "Black Life in America," "City Problems," and "Social Mobility." For each, a "Central Issue," key terms, teaching strategy, recorded resources, and literary references are listed. For example, the "Biographical Study" topic suggests the central issue: "Does Bob Dylan's music reflect the social and political milieu of America during the past twenty years?" Then a list of terms (in this case, "Autobiography," "Social Commentary," etc.) is given along with a class plan, discography, and bibliography. For "Black Life in America" the central issue suggested is: "Do the lyrics sung by black performers accurately reflect the experiences of Afro-Americans in the United States today?" Following the twenty-eight topics is a "Selected Bibliography of Music-Oriented Print Resources by Academic Subject," e.g. "Art and Photography," "Biography," "Black Studies," etc. Here, specific articles and books on music and social studies are cited.

Part two of the book, "Print Resources on Popular Music," consists of 180 pages of popular music bibliography arranged by topic (bibliographies, songbooks, genres, personalities, topics). This is followed by a sixty-page bibliography of popular music discographies. Then, a discography, "A Basic Popular Music Collection for Libraries," is presented in four sections: "Greatest Hits Albums," "Anthology Albums," "Standard Albums,"

and "Special Albums." And finally, a bibliography of print resources, mostly redundant given the earlier bibliographies, concludes the book. In fact, much in this book reprints earlier publications by Cooper, specifically his *Images of American Society in Popular Music: A Guide to Reflective Teaching*, and articles written for this and other journals.

A *Resource Guide to Themes in Contemporary American Song Lyrics, 1950-1985*, appears to include far more new material than the *Handbook*. The bulk of the volume is devoted to lists of popular song titles, performers, years, and manufacturer numbers arranged under fifteen topics. Each topical list is preceded by a short essay analyzing and commenting on song contents and patterns in the songs of each category. The topics themselves are subdivided into more specific categories. The first topic in the book, "Characters and Personalities," includes subtopics "Submissive Personalities," "Dominant Personalities," "Independent Personalities," "Heroes," and "Rebels and Outcasts." Another topic, "Death," includes "Accidental Deaths," "Dead Soldiers and Other War-time Casualties," "Loss of a Loved One," "Maturing, Aging, and Dying," "Murder," "Speculating on Death as a Natural Event," "Suicide," and "Tributes to Deceased Heroes and Villains (Historical and Legendary)." Three interesting tables list songs written in response to specific political events since 1960; dance craze songs written since 1950; and humorous songs written since 1950. The book concludes, like the *Handbook*, with a selected discography of 1950-1985 music, and a bibliography, both similar to those in the *Handbook*, but updated.

With these books, Cooper hopes that incorporation of popular music into general studies will cease to be considered a frill saved for the last class of the semester. He understands that popular music both reflects and shapes contemporary thinking, and that it should be studied for these reasons. I find the twenty-eight topics for study suggested in the *Handbook* to be narrow and superficial, and the suggested strategies somewhat dated. Sometimes, Cooper's approach to his subject reminds one of late-sixties and seventies educational movements to make studies "fun" and "relevant." (But then a biographical study based on the life and music of Bob Dylan would certainly not be perceived by students as a frill or treat in this day and age.)

The recommended "recorded resources" suggested under "Black Life in America" date back only to 1960 and include only quantitatively popular music. Popular music certainly does inform and encompass all social issues, but why must Cooper's body of popular music be restricted to that which is very popular, i.e., the Top 100? For the most part, he fails to consider many of the expressions of the pluralistic society he cites in his commentaries and which all popular music celebrates. By focusing on the rock era,

1955 to the present, and mainstream music, he is depriving students of many divergent and articulate views. Perhaps this is because folk music has already gained enough academic respectability to be included in curricula. But punk and alternative, small label and regional rock have less academic clout than the Top 100 and, with folk music, are generally more literate, articulate, and topical. Incorporating older music and all types of popular music into teaching would not only provide more views for analysis, but have the added virtues of broadening students' historical understanding and musical tastes.

Cooper's promotion of popular music studies is valid and need not be dated or interpreted as pandering to students. The Constitutional censorship issues raised by the Parents Music Resource Center naturally lend themselves to classroom discussion illustrated by provocative popular music. Though some of his bibliographic entries lack annotation needed to clarify the subject matter, his bibliographies are revealing, useful, and interesting to read. Cooper's books provide citations to many magazine and journal articles not cited elsewhere. Particularly useful are those on the music business and sociology. The song lists in the *Resource Guide* will be gold mines for ambitious radio disc jockeys and program directors.

Cooper has obviously devoted enormous energy to the lists of songs, recordings, topics, bibliographies, and discographies he has compiled over the years, and we are fortunate that he has chosen to share them through publication. I hope he continues to write, with annotations for the bibliographic citations, and a broadening of scope to encompass a longer time span and a more comprehensive definition of popular music.

Samuel Brylawski
Library of Congress

Contributors

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Kip Lornell grew up hearing stories about Whoopee John Wilfahrt and the Six Fat Dutchmen from his parents, who were raised in south central Minnesota. Long associated with the Blue Ridge Institute of Ferrum College, Ferrum, Virginia, Lornell currently holds a post-doctoral fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution and is working on a text devoted to American folk music. He is the author of two books and numerous articles about the vernacular music and culture of the United States.

James R. McDonald has published numerous articles on popular music subjects and on the American poet Ezra Pound. He is currently working on a book on the literary aspects of song lyrics. McDonald is Hardy Distinguished Professor of English at Millikin University, Decatur, Illinois.

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The JEMF

The John Edwards Memorial Forum is a research organization, mailing address: P.O. Box 83812, Los Angeles, California 90083. It is chartered as an educational non-profit corporation, supported by gifts and contributions.

The purpose of the JEMF is to further the serious study and public recognition of those forms of American traditional music disseminated by commercial media such as print, sound recordings, films, radio, and television. These forms include the music referred to as cowboy, western, country and western, old time, hillbilly, bluegrass, mountain, country, cajun, sacred, gospel, race, blues, rhythm and blues, jazz, soul, folk rock, rock and roll, and ethnic-American.

The Forum works toward this goal by compiling, publishing, and distributing bibliographical, discographical, and historical data; reprinting, with permission, pertinent articles originally appearing in books and journals; and reissuing historically significant out-of-print sound recordings.

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The Center for Popular Music is an interdisciplinary archive and research center devoted to promoting scholarship in American popular and vernacular music. Particular emphasis is placed on the significance of such music as an integral part of American cultural and social history and on its value in defining American experience. The Center works toward this goal by gathering and making accessible to scholars commercially-disseminated artifacts of American popular and vernacular music; generating original research materials such as recordings of musical events, oral history interviews, photographs, etc.; producing and disseminating publications of serious research in popular and vernacular music, including the journal *American Vernacular Music* (forthcoming in 1989), annotated phonograph records, monographs, etc.; and presenting public programs, such as conferences, lectures, performances of historical popular music, and radio programs, which complement the research aims of the Center.



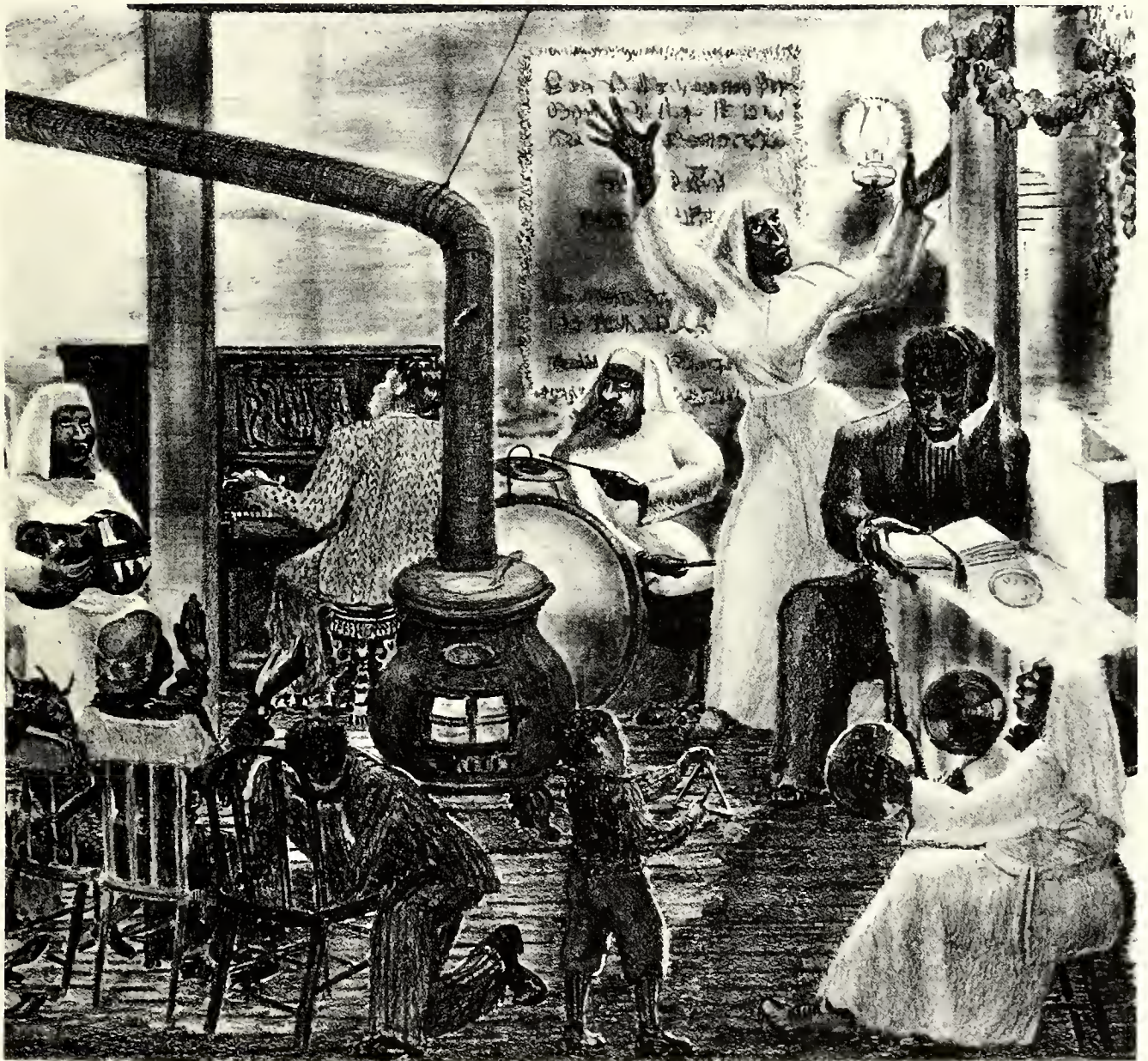
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Subscriptions to *American Vernacular Music* are \$15.00 per year for individuals; \$20.00 per year for libraries. Foreign subscribers should add an extra \$5.00 per year for surface postage, or an additional \$15.00 per year for airmail.

Most back issues of the *JEMF Quarterly* (volumes 6-21, nos. 17-76) are available at \$4.00 per copy (\$8.00 double issues); write for current list. Xerographic and microfilm copies of all issues are available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Address all inquiries regarding subscriptions, back issues, and other JEMF publications (excluding phonograph records) to:

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Paul F. Wells, Editor

American Vernacular Music

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Editorial

With this issue, we lay to rest the name *JEMF Quarterly*. The long, sometimes bumpy history of the journal is ably recounted by Norm Cohen as part of the special section "The JEMF in Retrospect." At the time the Center for Popular Music assumed responsibility for publication of the *Quarterly* and the necessity of a name change became obvious, Archie Green conceived the idea of a series of articles devoted to summarizing the work of the JEMF. We are pleased to present the fruits of Archie's idea to our readers.

Less pleasing is the necessity of including obituaries of two of the folklorists whose broad-minded attitudes and stature in the field were key factors in getting the study of vernacular music accepted in academia. Wayland Hand's catholic interests extended far beyond the genres of belief, superstition, legendry, and folk medicine in which his stellar scholarship has set the standards for the field. Ed Kahn, in his affectionate reminiscence, quite rightly points up Wayland's interest in musical matters, an interest which was manifested in his unflagging support for the JEMF. D.K. Wilgus was one of the first folksong scholars to recognize the importance of sound recordings in the continuum of folksong transmission, the fundamental principle on which much of the work of the JEMF was based. His influence, both direct and indirect, on the current generation of scholars involved in studies of vernacular music, has been enormous.

Although much of this issue is devoted to looking backward and to capping an era, the future of both this journal and the work spawned by the JEMF look quite healthy. The entire field of American music is currently enjoying a period of tremendous scholarly activity, with a growing appreciation for the importance of vernacular traditions in the broad spectrum of our musical culture. While in the early days folklorists were virtually the only academics who gave serious attention to vernacular musics, today one can hear excellent papers at conferences of the Sonneck Society for American Music, the Society for Ethnomusicology, the American Studies Association, and the International Association for the Study of Popular Music. At the time the JEMF began operations there were just a handful of books on the types of music within its purview. Today, by contrast, new books on country music, blues, jazz, and rock & roll seem to appear nearly every week.

The Center for Popular Music in many ways owes its existence to the groundwork laid by the JEMF. Although our collection has a broader scope than the JEMF's, our theoretical framework of viewing vernacular music as an important aspect of cultural history has its basis in the work of the JEMF. Thus, the torch is being passed not just editorially through the journal, but in a broader way as well.

Ed Kahn concludes his article "Early Days at JEMF" with the comment: "Any individual or organization that delves into this area of scholarship will have to be measured against our standards." Indeed we shall.

Memories of Wayland D. Hand

1907-1986

Ed Kahn

I will never forget the first day I met Wayland D. Hand. I had just transferred to UCLA as an undergraduate with the secret agenda of studying folklore. After renting a small room near the campus, I looked in the catalog of classes to see what was being offered in folklore and discovered that all of the classes were taught by Dr. Hand. Although it seemed a little out of order, I decided to visit his office although classes did not start for another two weeks. My knock was answered by a distinguished, but casually dressed, middle-aged man, who was obviously in his office to get work done and not to visit with students.

I announced my intention of studying folklore and Professor Hand seemed to have all the time in the world to tell me about the courses offered and to advise me which would be most appropriate for me. In the end, I signed up for everything that was available to me that semester. Wayland became a friend and the friendship lasted until the end of his life.

Wayland D. Hand was a most unusual person. The thing that really set him apart for me was his true commitment to helping people develop to their full potential along the lines of their individual interests. My immersion in his folklore classes was acknowledged by a number of gestures designed to help me enter the field of folklore more rapidly. Before the end of that first semester, he had urged me to attend meetings of the American Folklore Society and to consider attending the Folklore Institute the next summer in Bloomington, Indiana. Soon he helped me get my first publication in order and shortly thereafter he arranged for me to begin teaching a course in American Folk Song. He did similar things for many of his students.

From the beginning, he knew that my interest was in commercial rural music—a subject somewhat off the beaten path for that time. Although he always made sure that I secured a broad foundation in the discipline of folklore, he also made sure that my own interests were not ignored. It did not take me long to recognize in Wayland Hand a man who felt secure in his own scholarship and in himself. He was a true mentor—offering guidance and encouragement tailored to each student's needs.

By the time John Edwards died in 1960, I was already a graduate student and teaching folklore at night through UCLA's extension program. When the idea of establishing a center for the study of the music that had so captivated John Edwards came up, I went to Wayland and asked him for help in securing space for us at UCLA. Without hesitation, he gave his personal approval to the

project and soon contacted the highest levels of the formal university bureaucracy to determine what kind of arrangement would best serve the needs of our group. Our interaction with Wayland was always what one would hope could be a model for this kind of relationship. He always served the JEMF without regard for his personal preferences. In characteristic fashion, Wayland stayed in the background and allowed us to develop as we saw fit. But when we needed him, there was never any hesitation. His commitment was one hundred percent. The result was an unusual autonomy which served us well throughout our stay at UCLA. Had it not been for this independence, it would not have been possible for the JEMF to transfer its collection to the University of North Carolina when it was time to move on.

Aside from his invaluable work on behalf of the JEMF, it is important to point out some of his remarkable qualities. In my years as a student, I never saw another person who had such a clear understanding of the role he wanted to play in inspiring students. He was not interested in any personal reward. Rather, he saw needs and fulfilled them. I recall many students who found Dr. Hand to be that special friend who was there in time of need. I always admired his ability to deal with students who needed special attention. He was truly selfless. An indication of his real interest in his students was that he not only knew each of their names shortly after the semester had begun, but that he remembered these people years later. I remember taking my wife to meet Wayland. Although I had forgotten that she had taken a folklore course from him years earlier, when I introduced them he not only remembered her, but recalled her maiden name.

Wayland had a commitment to folklore that was equal to his commitment to people. Unlike many scholars who specialize in one small facet of their discipline, his work confirms a broad interest. He will be best remembered for his work in the field of superstition, custom, and belief. But he had real interest in folk song, folk tale, material culture, folk speech, and occupational lore as well. He delighted in the expressions, beliefs, customs, songs, and tales of people throughout the world. His walls contained woodcuts by Clare Leighton celebrating folk themes.

I remember, as a student, traveling to meetings with him. He loved to find an out-of-the-way ethnic restaurant for our dining. Traveling with him was always an entertaining experience because of the humor and joy that came out in his stories and perceptions. And listening to him was

always a delight, for he relished peppering his speech with colorful expressions that he had assimilated along the way. Once, when trying to find an elusive road sign, he advised: "Keep your eyes wide open as Las Vegas for that sign."

But his interest was far broader than just folklore. No picture of him would be complete without mention of his love of baseball. Many is the time, during baseball season, that I entered his office to find him poised in front of his typewriter with a transistor radio to his ear.

The death of Wayland D. Hand has deprived me of a personal friend, but more importantly, it represents the passing of an individual who personified qualities that are all too rare these days. I will miss him.

D.K. Wilgus 1918-1989

Erika Brady

D.K. Wilgus, Professor Emeritus of English and Anglo-American Folksong at UCLA, died on 25 December 1989, of complications following cardiovascular surgery. The swiftness with which word of his death circulated among "D.K. alumni" during this Christmas season says much about the enduring influence of the man as a teacher who bound graduate students and others sharing his concerns into a kind of *comitatus* lasting years into our professional careers. As a lover of Irish culture, D.K. would have appreciated the rich combination of present sorrow and remembered warmth and hilarity represented in this far flung telephone wake and, as a scholar, he would have set about immediately to document the process of transmission and variation in the process!

Born 1 December 1918, in West Mansfield, Ohio, Donald Knight Wilgus grew up listening to country music on the radio. He always cited Bradley Kincaid as a particular boyhood favorite; his own informal performances even fifty years later bore traces of this influence. Matriculating at Ohio State University in the late 1930s, he became one of the earliest of the campus folksingers who would later become such a fixture of the American college scene.

Providentially, medievalist and ballad scholar Francis Lee Utley guided Wilgus's extracurricular interest in folk music into scholarly channels. Under Utley's supervision, Wilgus wrote the first MA thesis devoted to commercially recorded "hillbilly music," tracing its roots in traditional Anglo-American folksong: a revolutionary claim at the time. As though to prove that the revolutionary was also a meticulous and discerning master of the conventions of literary scholarship, Wilgus's dissertation, published in 1959 as *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898*, (Rutgers University Press) remains unchallenged as the definitive work on the topic.

I write this essay from the campus where Wilgus took up his first professional academic appointment in 1950, when the institution was known as Western Kentucky State College. Wilgus's energetic activity on behalf of folk studies still bears fruit here at Western Kentucky University. The Western Kentucky Folklore Archive established by Wilgus in 1953 remains a major regional repository, with copies of his own collection a key component in the holdings. The journal *Southern Folklore* published here is the lineal descendant of *Kentucky Folklore Record*, founded by Wilgus and edited from 1955-1961. The flourishing Programs in Folk Studies carry on Wilgus's tradition of

sound scholarship applied within both the academic and public realms. In recognition of his contributions to the discipline during this period, he was elected a Fellow of the American Folklore Society in 1960.

Wilgus left Kentucky for UCLA in 1963, where he held a joint appointment in the departments of English and Music until his retirement in June, 1989. Director of the folklore program for seventeen years, Wilgus edited *Western Folklore* from 1970-1975, served as president of the American Folklore Society for the year 1971-1972, and taught classes in folklore, Anglo-American folksong, the ballad, fieldwork, and country and western music. In addition, he organized a series of half a dozen memorable folk festivals in which the large audiences could enjoy musical performances by a wide variety of traditional performers, and attend educational workshops often conducted by visiting folklorists. In the early 1970s, he extended his fieldwork to include Ireland, establishing a collection of Anglo-Irish narrative song at UCLA of international importance. His work on ballad classification applied to the indexing of this collection represents a major new approach to this complex problem.

The contributions of D.K. Wilgus to the field of folklore are significant enough for a far lengthier appreciation than is possible here: his measured appraisal of previous scholarship, his recognition of the importance of the home phonograph and the commercial music industry as a force in the documentation and transmission of folksong, and his chronicling of the development of popular musics such as blues and country-western as part of an important expressive process in American culture all warrant extended treatment. As a basis for this, he leaves for us a legacy of more than 250 articles, reviews, and books of his own writings, not to mention the invaluable collections of primary materials amassed by him in University archives.

I find myself reflecting, though, on D.K.'s less tangible legacy. When his presidential address to the American Folklore Society was published in *Journal of American Folklore* as "'The Text Is the Thing'" in 1973, it was widely—and correctly—regarded as a cautionary response to the style and methodology of folklorists focusing on the behavioral aspects of performance at the expense of the traditional primary unit of study: the verbal and musical text. But it was more than that. It was an expression of the profound reverence Wilgus bore toward the materials he studied, an appreciation which he unguardedly shared with his students. No matter how familiar, a fine ballad

well sung could bring him to tears. As one former student remarked, perhaps with more feeling than elegance: "The thing about D.K. was—he really loved the **stuff**." Behind the careful documentation and taxonomy, beyond disputation on text and context, beyond editorial and administrative pursuits, was his love for "the stuff" of folklore—its expressiveness and beauty in all their variations.

Certainly, we will sorely miss the works D.K. looked forward to completing in his retirement: the books on the ballads of Lord Leitrim and the Titanic, the task of organizing his collection of Kentucky popular belief and superstition, and the publication of the index of Irish narrative song. We can take comfort in the thought that the disposition of these materials is in the hands of his wife, Eleanor Long, a remarkable scholar in her own right. But nothing can replace the contagious enthusiasm of the man himself for the matter he studied—nothing, perhaps, except a carrying on of that energy and commitment on the part of those with whom D.K. shared his knowledge and his love.

Special Section: The JEMF in Retrospect

Introduction

Paul F. Wells

In the following section, various principals of the JEMF offer their thoughts on the organization and its work. Jazzer Smith, an Australian journalist, tells us about John Edwards the man. Ed Kahn, who corresponded extensively with Edwards, relates how the formation of the JEMF was taken from concept to reality. Norm Cohen was also in at the beginning and later guided the JEMF through its most productive period, an era he recounts here. Archie Green has given the *Quarterly* exceptional continuity through his long-running "Graphics" series; here he offers a second look at some of the most meaningful of the many visual images of music and musicians featured in the series over the past two decades. Mike Casey, at the University of North Carolina, provides a glimpse of the current status of the Edwards collection in its new home.

To preface and balance the views of Kahn, Green, and Cohen, who were intimately involved in the struggles to put the JEMF on the map, I offer a few comments on my own experience in coming, as a graduate student in the UCLA Folklore program, to an already-established JEMF. I cannot now remember exactly where I first learned about the JEMF, but I suspect that it was through the blurbs about the foundation on the liner notes of the reissues of blues and string band music in RCA's Vintage Series. Most albums in the series were compiled and annotated by people involved with JEMF. As a young undergraduate music major with a stronger interest in blues and bluegrass than in Bach and Beethoven, I eagerly devoured every bit I could on the music I loved. I kept running into the same names as authors of scholarly articles as well as record notes, and it was a revelation when I realized that these people were associated with an organization attached to a graduate program where it was perfectly acceptable to study this music.

Upon entering the UCLA Folklore & Mythology M.A. program in 1972, my utter delight at having the resources of the JEMF available to me was tempered when confronted with the less-than-ideal circumstances in which the collection was housed and under which the Foundation had to operate. I had envisioned that Green, Kahn, Cohen, *et al* were full-time staff members and that there would be an ample reading room complete with card catalogs, facilities for listening to records, and the like. In reality, the JEMF occupied one small office in the Folklore suite, and was staffed on a day-to-day basis by a part-time secretary (Anne Cohen at the time) and a couple of student workers. There was barely enough room for the employees to work, let alone any space for researchers.

However, everyone did the best they could under the circumstances, and just being there was enough.

At the start of my second year of graduate study I began to work for JEMF as a student employee, and ultimately had what was one of the few full-time (or nearly so) positions that ever existed on the JEMF staff when I was hired under an NEA grant to direct the JEMF's record reissue project. I was employed by the Foundation through the better part of the 1970s, working not only on the reissue series but also on a later project funded by the Library of Congress to compile a directory of resources of recorded ethnic music. I also helped with the day-to-day business of answering reference inquiries, selling publications, and dealing with whatever else happened to come along. Although I left in 1978 to go to work for CMH Records, I then served on the JEMF Board of Advisors and kept a hand in through frequent discussions with Norm and current office staff members.

Nor was I the only music junkie drawn to UCLA by the magnet of the JEMF. In fact, 1972 seems to have been the peak year for music-oriented students to enter the UCLA Folklore program. Starting at the same time were Charlie Seemann, currently Deputy Director of Collections & Research at the Country Music Foundation; Patricia Atkinson (Wells), a folklorist in Tennessee; Patricia Hall, a folklorist and educational consultant, also in Tennessee; and Michael Mendelson, pursuing a career in the computer industry and playing traditional music in Santa Barbara, California. Others who preceded and followed us, and for whom the JEMF was a major drawing card, include Barry Hansen, radio's "Dr. Demento;" David Evans, director of the Ph.D. program in Southern Regional Music at Memphis State University; John Fahey, well-known and influential acoustic guitarist; Willie Smyth, state folklorist in Oklahoma; and Erika Brady, who teaches in the Folklore program at Western Kentucky University. Most of these people put in time on the JEMF staff, and I am sure that all would acknowledge their work at JEMF as an educational experience equal to or greater than that of their formal university course work.

It is a tribute to the groundwork laid down by Norm, Archie, Ed, and the other guiding lights of the JEMF that the Foundation served as a focal point for so many people who have made contributions to the field.

The Long Journey Home: The Hitherto Untold Story of a Remarkable Man Called John Edwards

Jazzier Smith

John Kenneth Fielder Edwards is not a name that will ring many bells in the minds of Australian country music enthusiasts. Yet his name keeps cropping up in every definitive work on American country music.

Now, more than two decades after his tragic death in a car crash in Paramatta in Sydney, John Edwards should receive long overdue recognition in Australia for his tremendous contribution to the world of country music. Let us try to recreate here the personality, the energy, the motivations of John Edwards, the record researcher whose work even today is a vital reference point for American country music.

The way this story happened is well worth telling. In 1981, as editor of *Capital News*, Tamworth's country music newspaper, I started a regular feature called "Country Communicator." This page dealt with the media people involved in country music and musicians. One such communicator was noted Tasmanian researcher Hedley Charles. When I was interviewing Charles I asked him how he first became interested in the tedious task of researching. He said that John Edwards had been his major influence.

I'd never heard of Edwards—in all the years I'd spent writing for various Australian country music publications; I had to find out more. Hedley suggested I write to New Zealand's leading writer-historian, Garth Gibson, because Edwards had been a regular contributor to Garth's *Country and Western Spotlight* magazine from November 1955, until July 1959. Gibson turned out to be a fantastic help; my letterbox was crammed with his letters, books and written material on John Edwards.

Charles and Gibson also directed me to other people who had known John during his short life, and gave me phone numbers and addresses of his many American contacts. I was able to find his mother Irene, in Blair Athol, an Adelaide suburb, and she provided valuable related material. One letter or phone call about John Edwards seemed to lead to another. And soon the pieces of his hectic life began to take some kind of shape.

John Edwards was born in Sydney on 22 July 1932 to Irene and Tommy. He was never a moody child; rather happy-natured and industrious. The family was not poor. He was very polite and his attitude won him many friends. He attended four different state primary schools, the last Middle Harbor Public School where at eleven, he was equal dux with another boy who went on to Duntroon

Military College. John Edwards had a strong creative flair and would sit and draw for hours; he won several art competitions in primary school. He had an obsession with double-decker buses and many of his sketches featured them. As it turned out, his first and only job was as a roster officer for buses and trams with the Department of Transport.

But before that came Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore) where he won a scholarship that would take him through secondary school. John was always meticulous about detail and this was shown in a street directory of Cremorne and suburbs he compiled when he was fifteen. It was beautifully drawn, exactly to scale. He visited every street in Cremorne to draw it. At Grammar (Shore), art wasn't encouraged as a subject for boys; Edwards started learning languages and won several French and German prizes. He never liked sports, but was made to join the cadets and play cricket and football. His real love was the Australian bush and he would take long bike rides and explorations. With his friend, Earle Wood, John formed a small club and in summer on Sundays, they would ride from Cremorne to North Narrabeen (about ten miles) to swim and sunbake. The two rode with their club for the next two or three years.

In 1948 John started work with the Department of Transport; he was to die just eleven years and nine months later. Absorbed in his job and especially interested in trams, he was bitterly disappointed when the government of the day decided to replace all Sydney's trams and buses, and he campaigned for their return as a member of the Electric Traction Society.

Edwards's interest in early hillbilly music and artists began in his last year at school, with old 78s of the Carter Family and others. No one in his family really shared his love for the music, but Irene Edwards was always very supporting and encouraging to him and his many friends who were always coming around to listen to his records. It was in the mid-forties that he began seriously to collect records. At first he concentrated on material released in Australia, but began writing to fellow collectors overseas and these contacts led him to others, and in some cases, directly to the artists themselves. Edwards soon amassed a complete set of Jimmie Rodgers's 78s and almost all of the Carter Family's vast repertoire. His collections soon included not only countless 78s, but photographs and biographical information on the artists as well.

John Edwards was quite outspoken and not afraid to say exactly how he felt. He loved to argue, particularly on the merits of different styles of music. His favorite music was recorded in the "Golden Age"—as he like to call it, 1924-1939. He was critical of the modern country music, which he described as "pop with a pseudo-western flavor." But because he found few Australian industry people interested in his work in early country music—they often laughed at him—he developed a cynicism that stayed with him. He turned more and more to his overseas friends, who shared his enthusiasm, and who looked up to him as undisputed leader of the early music collectors.

In mid-1958 John Edwards left in his desk a will which read:

In the event of anything happening to me, I would ask that my following wishes be observed, without change: My records not be given, sold, or made available in any way to anyone outside the USA. I ask that Gene Earle be contacted re the collection and be given full freedom to take over all the discs, tapes, dubs, files, photos, and all printed matter relative to my collecting interests. Arrangements for transportation are to be made as Gene Earle sees fit. All materials to be used for the furtherance of serious study, recognition, appreciation, and preservation of genuine country or hillbilly music, especially as regards the artists and discs of the 'Golden Age' recording area.

In the first issue of America's *Country Directory*, published just two months before his death, John Edwards explained to Americans how he began his researching work:

I've listened to hillbilly music on the radio for more years than I can recall, but it wasn't until the end of World War II that I began to gather discs in ever-increasing quantities. I hardly realized then that a casual pastime would develop into a fascinating and absorbing interest with so many facets. For a long time my tastes were limited by the material that was available in Australia, although fortunately many of the greatest names from the Golden Age were represented by releases on such labels as Regal Zonophone and Decca. In a frenzy of record-buying, junk-shopping, and cleaning-out the libraries of many country radio stations, after several years I had obtained copies of virtually every worthwhile disc issued in this country. Of necessity, I had to look towards overseas sources.

Edwards enrolled at Sydney University for night classes with the aim of obtaining a degree in the area of folklore. On Christmas Eve 1960, he was driving home from a party after dropping off some friends; just a few minutes from home his car was in a collision with a heavy truck. He was killed instantly. John Edwards's life as an Australian record researcher was over.

When he died, John had been working for two years with his good friend and correspondent, Eugene Earle, on

a book dealing with early American hillbilly music and artists. It was Earle who was to be the executor of his will. In 1961 the entire Edwards collection was shipped to Earle in New Jersey. The enormous mass and quality of the files on old-style music stunned the Americans. They knew he had a first-class record collection but it seems his counterparts in the United States now saw him as one of the greatest authorities on early commercially-recorded old-time, hillbilly, or folkstyle music; his record collection ranked with the best in the world.

Eugene Earle proved to be exactly the right man to handle such a valuable collection. Together with Archie Green and several other Edwards contacts, he set up the memorial foundation in Edwards's name, an archival and research center devoted to the study of commercially recorded and published American folk music, at the Folklore and Mythology Center, University of California. Under the banner of American folk, such types as country, western, hillbilly, cowboy, country-western, gospel, and folk-rock are brought into focus in articles that appear in the *JEMF Quarterly*.

When he died he owned the biggest collection of early American folk-country music records outside America—3,325 sides on 78 RPM and 1,261 on tape and acetate dubs. They went to the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, plus 1,000 tapes, letters, and related material. The archives were set up to preserve 78 RPM and LP records, tapes, transcription discs, photographs, fan club journals, song folios, books, sheet music, record catalogues, posters, correspondence, and bibliographical, historical, and discographical data.

But what was he really like? What did his Australian friends know of him?

John Edwards was a big man—there was no denying that. In 1960, at twenty-eight, he weighed well over fourteen stone [approx. 200 pounds], and was five feet nine inches tall. This was quite a contrast to photographs of him as a gangly sixteen-year-old Shore student in 1948. Edwards was a heavy smoker and drinker.

One Australian who knew John Edwards really well was now-retired abattoir worker Darby Klein, of the outer Sydney suburb of Blacktown. He was Edward's closest friend from 1949 until his death in 1960. I drove 440 kilometers to Sydney from Tamworth to talk with Darby at his home in Sunnyholt Road, Blacktown on Monday, 19 July 1982. I believed it was imperative—almost mandatory—to talk to the man who knew him so well during his remarkable life.

The hurt and the pride still showed. He remembered the funeral well. A double-decker bus overflowing with grief-stricken fellow workers attended his funeral at the general lawn section of the Northern Suburbs Cemetery, in Chatswood in 1960; cards and letters came in from all over the world.

Darby Klein said Edwards's love of American folk, country, and old-time music was "a total obsession." His mammoth collection was set up in his bedroom. "John wanted it there, close at hand where he felt it was safe. Besides, it seemed the natural place for it. John had built his own filing cabinets, organized a filing system, and taught himself to use a typewriter." In a few months he became a very efficient typist, pouring out letters to the United States and other places.

Regular overseas correspondence was one of the ways Edwards built up his collection. Klein remembers that Sara Carter of the Carter Family used to describe her persistent pen-pal as "Our John in Australia." Edwards often wrote to Jimmie Rodgers's wife Carrie, Gene Autry, Cliff and Bill Carlisle, Wilf Carter, and other stars. They not only helped him get copies of their recorded material, but gave him vital American contacts.

Edwards's way of acquiring local vintage records was unique. He'd write to his growing number of American contacts for the very latest record releases. Then he'd drive to a radio station he believed had copies of previous discs in their libraries. He'd offer the station management his brand new records—unobtainable in Australia—in exchange for their old 78s. It was a ploy that seldom failed and ensured that the collection grew steadily.

"Because I worked very good hours at the abbatoir, I went with John on many of his record recoveries," Darby said. "He used to spend weekends on record-gathering trips all over Australia. We went to Toowoomba, Lismore, Wagga, Newcastle, and Melbourne. It was often said that John could sniff out a mint 78 RPM record with the accuracy of a pedigreed bloodhound. I can clearly remember a couple of trips to Tamworth and Newcastle where John picked up some Zonophone discs from the thirties which had never been played on radio. He was tickled pink!"

Edwards's hobby cost him enormously in time, research, and money. Klein said Edwards would think nothing of driving halfway across Australia if there was a remote possibility that some 78s could be found. Here's an illuminating quote from a John Edwards letter to fellow collector, David Crisp, dated 12 May 1958: "I estimate that I've spent several thousand pounds on my collection, including my equipment, tape recording gear, and so on. It's been well worth it, because now I know that my collection—that is a fact—is the best outside the U.S. and ranks with the best inside the U.S. As an example, I've never heard of any collector who has a larger collection of the Carter Family than I—even amongst the U.S. enthusiasts."

He paid up to ten dollars for a rare Carter Family disc in mint condition from the United States. Because he was a single man with few commitments, John spent most of his money on updating and improving his musical treasures. He made his own hard covers to protect his valuable

"finds" and used a fiber needle so it wouldn't wear his records. The Edwards collection had neared 2,000 mostly-perfect discs by late 1959 and consisted of just about every major American folk-country artist who had recorded up to that period. There were also early jazz and race recordings, but not nearly as much as folk and country material.

Klein says Edwards would have eventually gone to the United States. His American contacts had already suggested that he enroll at Berkeley College [University of California, Berkeley] or UCLA to study for a professional career in folklore. He even had offers of accommodation and help with travel expenses, but the tragic Christmas Eve car accident ended all that.

Said Klein:

Lord knows how big he could have become in the music industry had he lived. The world certainly lost an incredible country-folk music stalwart all those years ago. I just hope that John ultimately receives the recognition he deserves in his own country. No one in Australia wanted to know him or anything about his collection in the fifties ...that's why he specified in his will that his material be sent to Eugene Earle in America in the event of his death...the Americans were the only ones that took a real interest in him. Mind you, he didn't win too many Australian country music industry friends or help his own cause with his outspoken comments on local artists. He admired the earlier material of Tex Morton and a few others, but generally was unflattering to those who followed. In fact one of this favorite expressions which got him into countless arguments was 'the older the music the better.'

In the words of John Edwards's Sydney friend of five years, Wilf Hilder, "John was a complex character and this is one of the reasons I have been reluctant to give his full story to the media. At times he went out of his way to stir people about their tastes in modern country music and I feel he made more than his fair share of enemies. This is one of the reasons he is not honored in his own country—a great shame."

But had John Edwards not been so entranced by early American folk music, had he not fought for its acceptance one hundred percent of the time against formidable apathy in his own country, would he have achieved such incredible and lasting results in one short decade?

This is a shortened version of an article which originally appeared in The Australian Book of Country Music, edited by the late Jazzer Smith (Gordon, NSW: Berghouse Floyd Tuckey Publishing Group, 1984), pp. 60-71. It is reprinted with permission from Chevron Publishing Group.

Early Days at JEMF

Ed Kahn

In the late 1950s, I first began my correspondence with John Edwards. He had become the focus for a number of record collectors and scholars interested in the kind of music that fascinated him for most of his all-too-short life. John possessed an unusual array of strengths: he was a compulsive collector, a dedicated scholar, and an excellent correspondent. He promptly answered letters from his friends around the world and was always willing to share his information and perceptions with anyone who cared to join forces.

So it was only natural, when he died tragically at the end of 1960, for his friends to think of establishing some kind of public forum and archive to continue his work. He had left a will stating that he wanted his material to be used for the furtherance of scholarship.

The early years of the JEMF proved exciting. At the time, there was little precedent for our kind of work. We drew from a diverse group of people with complementary skills and interests. We set as our task to serve not only the academic community, but also to try to integrate record collectors, discographers, fans, performers, and representatives from the music industry into our work. We wanted representation not only from the United States, but from around the world. Our first board of directors reflected this makeup.

The challenge of providing a forum for these divergent interests to come together excited our founders. We knew that we could not entirely please any of the factions, but felt it necessary to draw on the skills and talents of our diverse group. The first challenge, after the organizational tasks of establishing our non-profit status and creating a functioning body, was to find a home where we could set up an office and house the collection. For many reasons, UCLA seemed like a good choice. Wayland Hand, director of the folklore program there, offered constant encouragement and on his own provided us with space.

The next major challenge was funding. John Edwards provided us with the material to begin our work, but left no money for establishing an organization to carry on his work. We all felt at the time that it was important to maintain our independence at all costs. As a result, we never asked UCLA for funding as we felt that accepting money would be tantamount to selling the collection to the university. We had seen shifts in the academic winds of the past and did not want this collection to end up forgotten in a basement.

We knew that the record industry served as the most affluent element in our makeup. We reasoned that, despite the longstanding hostility between industry and

academy, it might be possible to bridge the gap, and took this as a positive challenge.

In the early days, we had a number of directors connected to the commercial country-music industry. Many of these people, although extremely helpful to us, were able to get but nominal monetary support for our work. But more importantly, as it turned out, they provided us with direct access to the industry. Brad McCuen and Steve Sholes, for instance, were always available to provide information from the RCA files. We also formed a mutually beneficial relationship with them in which they used us in the preparation of early reissue albums.

Thurston Moore, perhaps more than any other single industry figure, really believed in the JEMF and worked hard to champion our cause within the industry. His business, publishing country music scrapbooks, the *Country Music Who's Who*, and finally a magazine, brought him into daily contact with a diverse group of people connected with the country music industry, and he tirelessly worked on our behalf. He brought us contacts, coverage, and occasionally monetary support from artists and industry executives.

The industry as a whole approached our new foundation with both awe and fear. They saw us as both a validation of their work and as the embodiment of the intellectual establishment which they feared and mistrusted. No major artist ever actually underwrote our work although many were of invaluable help and support.

Early on, Archie Green and I tried to get underwriting from the major foundations only to learn that country music at that time still was not an acceptable area of study. We gained a little backing from the Newport Folk Foundation, but no organization ever made a real commitment to the JEMF. However, the dedication of our own board always carried us forward, for all of us believed in the JEMF. Our goals met with resistance on all fronts, but for different reasons each time.

Within the University of California system, we occupied an unusual position. On one hand, we had the use of the facilities and many advantages of being on the UCLA campus. But at the same time, we were never really permitted to work up to our potential. In the early days on campus, the folklore program began to pick up steam. By the mid-1960s a wonderful group of graduate students had been drawn to UCLA. The two major drawing cards were D.K. Wilgus, who had come to the campus in 1960, and the JEMF.

But a number of individuals, drawn to the JEMF, provided substantial help during those early years. The most

important, Norm Cohen, was attracted to our work early on. He came up with the idea to begin the *Quarterly*. When I left the Foundation temporarily in 1967, Norm filled in and when I ultimately left the Los Angeles area in 1970, Norm assumed the responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the JEMF, a position he maintained until the collection was moved to the University of North Carolina in 1983.

Another early supporter of the JEMF, Robert Houlton, from Britain, had come to the United States in order to study the economic structure of the media industries. Almost as soon as he arrived in California, he made contact with the JEMF and never stopped supporting our work. His most concrete contribution became a fine article on the JEMF for the *Los Angeles Times*. The response to Houlton's article was immediate and varied. We were approached by several professional fund raisers who outlined programs whereby we could sell candy and car washes in order to raise money.

At the same time, several serious enthusiasts approached us. They wished to join forces and see if their own areas of expertise could help us. The most important of these contacts, Ken Griffis, formed the Friends of the JEMF, and thereby took a good deal of the responsibility for our financial support for many years. In time he became fully involved with the work and direction of the JEMF itself.

During the early years, we began a number of innovative programs. We started our reprint series as soon as quality articles began to appear in the academic presses. Likewise, we made an attempt to put together a syndicated radio show. The original idea called for Merle Travis to do the announcing and the program to be made available to a national audience. In time, the project turned into a series run over the local PBS radio outlet. Barry Hansen, who later became nationally known as Dr. Demento, served as the announcer and also scripted a number of the shows.

As I look back on those early years of JEMF, it fills me with a sense of sorrow as well as good deal of pride. The sorrow stems from the fact that we never obtained the funding necessary to do the work when the greatest need and opportunity were present. Although we have a reasonably complete picture of the people and forces at work in the development of this music, the part we were not able to preserve still cries out. We had the skills and knowledge to do a much more thorough job; only a lack of funding stood in our way.

But overriding any shortcomings I feel is the greater feeling that the overall experience achieved success. In terms of our broadest goals, we succeeded. We established very high standards for scholarship of this kind. Any individual or organization that delves into this area of scholarship will have to be measured against our standards. And now, more than a quarter of a century after

John Edwards's death, we can look with pride at the fact that the story of the music he loved has been told rather fully.

For the most part, the gaps have been filled in. A good deal more than the barest outlines are clearly understood and documented. The music and its culture have the respect they deserve. Perhaps it is symbolically fitting, however, that the study of this threadbare vein of American culture should be underfunded. And perhaps the lack of funds brought about the depth of commitment which we enjoyed. In those early years most of our work consisted of a labor of love.

JEMF and the *Quarterly*: Reminiscences of a Shy and Retiring Editor

Norm Cohen

In the spring of 1963 I had just completed my post-graduate work at University of California, Berkeley, and had taken a job in Los Angeles. During my three-year stay in Berkeley, my interests in folk music had broadened considerably through live concerts on campus, the Berkeley Folk Festivals, and at various bay area coffee houses; and through two series of radio programs on Pacifica's KPFA. Ed Cray's "From Here to Sunday" broadcasted ninety minutes of the best traditional folk music available on disc each week; and Phil Elwood's several jazz programs offered traditional jazz, blues, and contemporary jazz. Elwood had several times mentioned the New York periodical, *Record Research*, calling attention to its regular 78 rpm record auctions as the best place to acquire old jazz and blues recordings. When I received my first issue, I found that the auctions also included a few 78s by Uncle Dave Macon, Samantha Bumgarner, Buell Kazee, the Carter Family, and others that Cray played from time to time on his radio program. I was soon avidly awaiting each new *Record Research* issue so I could pore over the auction and submit my modest bids. I mention these personal biographical details only because they indicate the factors directly responsible for my new interest—in 1962-63—in old time hillbilly music and blues.

UCLA held its first folk festival a few months after my return to the city of my adolescence. The university had an active folklore program under the direction of Wayland Hand and D.K. Wilgus, and the first few festivals not only afforded me opportunities to hear more traditional music, but also to meet D.K. Wilgus, Ed Kahn, and Gene Earle, and to learn about the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, a corporation established in 1960, but as yet without an address. Only in June of 1964 did it move into a small office on the top floor of UCLA's Bunche Hall, in the Folklore and Mythology Center.

San Francisco etymologist Peter Tamony had just given the JEMF a collection of some 2,600 rare vintage blues and gospel 78 rpm records, but JEMF's cramped quarters did not allow space to shelve them. In the fall of 1964, as soon as shelves had been built, I joined a small group—Gene Earle, Ed Kahn, Barry Hansen, and occasionally others—who would gather one or two evenings a week to unpack the boxed treasures, sort, and shelve the 78s. Someone had access to a portable turntable and brought it into the office so we could sample the magnificent recordings as we filed them away. This activity constituted my first "formal" involvement with the JEMF.

At that time the JEMF had just received a grant of \$5,000 from the Newport Folk Foundation. Part of this money helped to bring Archie Green, then Librarian at the University of Illinois's Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, out to UCLA as consultant. Archie's main assignment was to develop a filing system and archiving procedures to accommodate the ephemeral materials that comprised JEMF's unique collection. With the remainder of the grant money the Board of Directors hired Alicia James as part-time secretary/office manager. In the latter capacity, she directed JEMF's one research assistant, occasional UCLA student volunteers and work study helpers whom we employed to index the record holdings, the song folios, and the tape recordings.

By the end of 1965, much of the basic cataloging had been completed and the office, though tiny and crowded, was beginning to be usable as a research resource. Each semester for the next few years, D.K. Wilgus would assign some of his folk music students projects that utilized the JEMF's holdings and served at the same time to enhance their usefulness. For example, a student might be given the task of compiling a set of tapes of all Fiddlin' John Carson recordings in chronological order, and transcribing the texts.

In 1964 and 1965 I sat in on two evening courses that Ed Kahn taught at UCLA Extension—one on general American folklore and the other specifically on American folk music. Each evening that we drove to class together we discussed the JEMF and its progress. Eventually the idea of a regular publication came up. I had already had some journalistic/editing experience in my high school years, and was eager to help inaugurate a journal for the JEMF. Ed proposed that we co-edit the new publication, and the JEMF Board of Directors approved the idea when he presented it to them. Ed hesitated to make a commitment that would drain too much of our resources and energies, and after considerable discussion we decided on a modest mimeographed newsletter format. Leery of our ability to maintain a regular quarterly schedule, we announced that "The *JEMF Newsletter* will be published several times a year at irregular intervals." Archie Green volunteered the services of University of Illinois artist/autoharp player Doyle Moore to design for us a logo for the cover page. Moore had earlier designed a similar cover for the University of Illinois Campus Folksong Club's publication, *Autoharp*.

In its first year, beginning October, 1965, the *Newsletter*

boasted a total of forty-five pages distributed among three issues. Its contents, as described in the masthead that appeared on the cover page of each issue, included

- Foundation reports
- Works-in-progress items from collectors and scholars
- Notes and queries
- Bibliographic, biographic, historical, and occasional discographic data
- Reprints of material from ephemeral sources
- Correspondence.

(We dropped "Correspondence" from the list in the third issue; and the adjective "occasional," in the sixth issue.) Missing from this list of promised subject matter was original articles written specifically for the *Newsletter*; the fourth item specified "data," not "articles." We felt not quite ready to commit ourselves to material that would take us unambiguously beyond the confines of a simple newsletter and into the ranks of fan magazines or academic journals. We remained within our self-imposed boundaries in the first year of the *Newsletter*'s existence. Most of the pages were taken up with annual reports, JEMF news, reprints of newspaper articles about JEMF, abstracts of academic dissertations that dealt with "our" music, lists of JEMF holdings, and "tapescripts"—abbreviated transcripts of interview tapes in the JEMF archives.

In its first two years, the *Newsletter* appeared three times a year. In the third year, we decided to aim for a regular quarterly schedule, and so announced on the cover page. To make a transition from the July-to-June schedule of the first two volumes to a January-to-December schedule, Volume 3 had only two issues: September and December, 1967.

We had another modest publication venture as well as the *Newsletter*; as one of JEMF's first undertakings we initiated a series of reprints of scholarly articles, originally published in academic journals, that we felt deserved wider attention. For many years we distributed these reprints, bound in our own covers, free of charge, but eventually, in spite of our great dislike for charging money for scholarly reprints, we reluctantly acknowledged that we could not afford such generosity and charged fifty cents apiece for them.

In the *Newsletter*'s second year, Archie Green proposed a series of articles about country music advertisements, posters, circulars, and other printed announcements, to be called "Country Music Graphics." Ed and I spent the better part of an evening pondering the title and its implications, and finally proposed that it be changed to "Commercial Music Graphics" in order to allow for an eventual broader range of subject matter. We little realized at the time that we were inaugurating what was to become the *JEMF Newsletter/Quarterly*'s longest-running feature and

perhaps its most significant contribution to music scholarship.

By the end of 1966, we realized that a part-time secretary could not keep up with the growing work load, and we gambled that our financial plight would improve sufficiently to permit us to afford a full-time secretary. We hired Mary Vernon, formerly secretary for the Newport Folk Foundation, who had recently moved to Southern California. Mary's long tenure was followed by a succession of part-time secretaries—Peggy Rives, Anne Cohen, Maria Edgar, Rebecca Ziegler, and Linda Painter, all of whom were UCLA students or recent graduates. Although most of these women were not particularly knowledgeable about running an archive in general, or about country music in particular, all were exceptionally loyal to the JEMF, willingly putting in extra hours when necessary, carrying out duties from mundane business matters to painstaking replies to complex inquiries from correspondents. For years I had worried over the inadequate security safeguarding JEMF's valuable records and other collectanea. Among the UCLA students who worked part time, volunteered for, or used JEMF's resources numbered several record collectors, not all of whom were scrupulously reliable about handling rare recordings. I always placed full confidence in our secretaries to monitor discreetly the comings and goings of all users of the material, and to insure that borrowers returned what they had taken promptly. JEMF's secretaries were among its most valued assets.

In the first few years the JEMF's financial status teetered precariously at the brink of solvency. Ed Kahn and Archie Green took advantage of their own friendships with people within the record and country music industries to solicit contributions to JEMF, but we continually lacked adequate funds to carry out all the projects we envisioned. In 1965 and 1966, Ed and our then-secretary ran food concession booths at the annual Topanga Canyon Banjo-Fiddle Contests in order to raise a precious few hundred dollars that paid for postage expenses, but we realized in retrospect that selling hot dogs dissipated manpower far too inefficiently.

In March, 1967, Ed Kahn left the country for a year of anthropological field work in Nepal. With some reluctance, I agreed to assume the title of Acting Executive Secretary in his absence. At that time I also took over full responsibility for the *Newsletter*, although we continued to list both our names as Editors on the masthead. In January, 1970, Ed tendered his resignation as Executive Secretary with regrets and, in the absence of an avalanche of volunteers for the position, the Board of Directors chose me his successor.

Throughout 1966 and 1967 one of the goals uppermost in our minds was the inauguration of a series of record reissues that would span all phases of hillbilly music in a

set of carefully planned and meticulously annotated LP albums. We had two goals in mind, apart from the subject matter of the albums per se: (1) establishing a precedent for academic institutions to lease out-of-print recordings from the original owners; and (2) setting high standards for the careful documentation of sound recordings. We proudly announced our plans in the September 1967 issue of the *Newsletter*, outlining the contents of the albums that we envisioned. We listed twenty survey and topical albums, as well as a series of albums each of which would be devoted to a single important artist, to a single musical instrument or style, and to a chronological survey of country music. We recognized that our actions were somewhat premature—we had neither the funds nor the committed personnel nor the agreements with the record companies—yet we felt pressure to offer a new approach to the reissue problem. The major companies were issuing very little vintage material, and the few small, independent companies working with the material were doing so illegally—i.e., without the authorization of the legal owners of the recordings. We felt that a non-commercial, educational institution might be able to secure the cooperation of the major labels—RCA, Columbia, Decca, Capitol—and break the impasse that collectors and scholars alike deplored. Consequently, we plunged into the waters without life raft or even a clear view of the opposite shore.

While we struggled over the problems of permissions, we opened negotiations with philanthropic sources for financial support for the project. Not until 1975 did we receive a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support a record reissue project, by which time we had already issued three albums with moneys raised directly on our own. By this time, other companies had become much more active in producing reissues, both authorized and otherwise, blunting somewhat the urgency of our original commitment. We took a much more modest approach to our own program. With the NEA funds we hired Paul Wells as project manager, and in the next six years we produced six more albums. Although our most elaborate record brochures ended up costing more to produce than the albums themselves, in most cases we eventually recovered all our expenses in album sales. Our first album, JEFM 101: *The Carter Family on Border Radio* had sold nearly 5,000 copies by 1983, the year we transferred rights to the records to Down Home Music; and JEMF 102: *The Sons of the Pioneers* had sold nearly 4,000. I count among JEMF's efforts some of the best-documented folk music albums ever issued.

Although in retrospect the nine albums we issued present an achievement of which we could all be proud, at the time it seemed to us that JEMF's Record Reissue project inched along with ponderous lethargy. I was particularly conscious of the ambitious promises that we had made in our initial announcements of the project; periodically we

would get letters of inquiry from readers wondering what had ever become of the grand scheme. Ken Griffis found the format and pace of the project too confining for his own interests, and after producing one JEMF album on the Sons of the Pioneers, he established, under the aegis of the Friends of the JEMF, a separate label, AFM (American Folk Music), on which he issued several more albums of western and western swing music—Sons of the Pioneers, Farr Brothers, Tex Williams, and others. These albums did not have the lengthy scholarly brochures that distinguished most of the ordinary JEMF albums and thus demanded considerably less money and time to issue. Ultimately, Ken donated the profits from all of these AFM albums to the JEMF.

The Record Reissue Project did not live up to all of our promises, but nonetheless we could be proud of its accomplishments. In those years other projects fell far short of their goals for one reason or another: an abortive Kitty Wells project filled me with guilty feelings for many years afterward. It was the brainchild of one of JEMF's most generous (though generally anonymous) donors, who happened to be a devoted fan of Wells. He was anxious to underwrite what would eventually be a discography/biography, as well as an extensive record reissue project spanning the careers of the Anglin Brothers, Johnny and Jack, and Kitty Wells herself. We embarked on an extensive course of correspondence with the Kitty Wells management, and got as far as securing from them a complete series of taped dubs of all the recordings they had in their files, as well as a considerable amount of printed material. But we stumbled over two obstacles. First, we could never conduct the necessary series of in-depth interviews that we had planned because we found no one available at the time both competent and interested in the project. Second, we found that despite repeated efforts, the Kitty Wells organization failed to understand the extent of our interests and never provided us with all the material that we required. Had we had someone in Nashville who could have managed this project it might have ended more felicitously but, as it was, we reluctantly had to give it up. I felt that we had let down an enthusiastic JEMF supporter and had fallen down on a project that could have been a milestone in post-war country music scholarship.

As part of our relation with UCLA, our student workers and secretaries were on the UCLA payroll, and supplies, telephone, and printing were all paid out of UCLA accounts. To permit this, we had to make periodic gifts to UCLA, against which all our expenses would be charged. For a few years we managed to keep within our budgets, but in the late 1960s, as we became more ambitious in our various publication programs, we were continually running into the red. Only the inefficiency of UCLA's financial bureaucracy enabled this to continue

for months at a time before coming to the attention of the authorities. As our debt to UCLA mounted, we sought more and more desperate measures. Finally, in 1983, when we owed the university over \$20,000, we saw no alternative but to sell the collection.

In the 1960s, we always kept such a denouement in the back of our minds as we explored ideas for keeping the Foundation fiscally afloat. At annual Board of Directors' Meetings we repeatedly argued over the wisdom of allowing our UCLA ledger sheet to go into the red. Wayland Hand, as an unofficial representative of the university, counseled against running a deficit, and most of the other Directors present sympathized with this fiscally conservative position. Archie Green boldly advocated "deficit spending" and argued that we always had the assets of the Foundation as security against any debts. If we had not heeded his suggestion fully half of JEMF's projects would never have been undertaken.

In 1967, Ken Griffis, a long-time fan of western music, contacted Ed Kahn and asked if he could do anything to help the JEMF, which he had learned about through an article in the *Los Angeles Times*. Ultimately, out of Ken's eager desire to help, arose the Friends of the JEMF, an organization devoted to raising funds for the Foundation. And, without Ken's enthusiastic work organizing benefit concerts and other promotional projects, we surely would have had to close our doors long ago. Most importantly, Ken's dedication gave us the luxury of separating the fund-raising chores from the executive responsibilities of running an archival and research facility. In 1973, 1974, 1976, and 1978, Ken engineered benefit concerts, the most successful of which netted more than \$20,000 for JEMF, enabled us to pay off mounting debts to UCLA, and put us in the black for the next couple years.

In 1968, one of the managers of the Stoneman Family approached us with a proposal. We had just run an interview and discography of Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman, and the family was interested in publishing some sort of booklet with a biography and discography as a tribute to the late pioneer recording artist. We have as yet no established mechanism for publications other than the *Newsletter* and the Reprints. This enticement prompted us to establish another ongoing publications format: the Special Series, deliberately titled broadly so as to encompass a wide range of potential contributions, but distinct from the Reprints Series in that the Special Series would consist of material that had not already been published elsewhere. *The Recording Career of Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman* became Special Series #1, to be followed over the years by modest bi-discographies of Uncle Dave Macon, Molly O'Day, and others. Eventually Ken Griffis and Johnny Bond wrote what were to become two of the best-selling—as well as most ambitious—undertakings in the series: Bond's own autobiography/discography and Griffis' biography/dis-

cography of the Sons of the Pioneers.

The contents of the *Newsletter* broadened considerably in the third, and especially fourth, volumes. My own interests in hillbilly discography resulted in several artist discographies—Ernest Stoneman, the Pickard Family, the Stripling Brothers, and Ambrose "Uncle Am" Stuart; in record series numerals—King, Aurora, and Polk; and in two bibliographic features: checklists of published hillbilly artist discographies and record numerals. Also, in the tenth issue (June, 1968) we published the first original article apart from Archie Green's Graphics series: a bibliodiscography of the "Whitehouse Blues"/"Cannonball Blues"/"McKinley" song complex, contributed by Neil V. Rosenberg. In the following issue I began a series called "Commercial Music Documents" to parallel Archie Green's "Graphics" series. It differed from the latter in that it focused on artifacts never originally intended for the public eye.

Another undertaking that never reached full completion—and a source of great regret to me for years after—was our projected hillbilly discography. After Ed Kahn's departure for Nepal, I explored novel ideas for raising funds with Archie Green and D.K. Wilgus. A long-standing need in country music scholarship had been—and still is—a complete discography of pre-war hillbilly recordings to parallel the compilation, *Blues and Gospel Records*, by overseas discographers Robert Dixon and John Godrich. JEMF was the obvious organization to undertake a project that seemed beyond the capabilities of private collectors and discographers—notwithstanding that the blues and gospel discography (and jazz discographies before it) had been executed without any institutional support. It seemed a worthwhile project to take to the National Endowment for the Humanities in quest of support. Wilgus suggested that we give the project more salability if we proposed a computerized discography, and I took him up on the suggestion.

In preliminary discussions, NEH apprised us that funds were not available for the major commitment that a full discography would entail, so we submitted a proposal for a pilot study: the computerized discography of the hillbilly recordings of one important record company—the Starr Piano Company, owners of the Gennett, Champion, and other labels. This seemed a reasonable project because Gene Earle had made, some years earlier, microfilms of the company ledgers then in the possession of Bill Grauer. We hired JEMF advisor Guthrie Meade as a consultant because of his knowledge of hillbilly music, his experience as a discographer, and his occupation as a computer programmer for the National Archives. Gus helped us lay out the format for compiling the data. At the time, the best medium seemed to be punched paper tape—a format that has long since become obsolete in favor of discs, diskettes, and magnetic tape. We mailed the punched tape to Gus,

who would then work with a company in the Washington area to convert that format to a magnetic tape format.

We received funds for two years which, we felt certain, would suffice for this small project. Unfortunately, we did not anticipate the time and effort that would be required for the typists who transcribed the raw data from the barely legible microfilms of the hand-written original files. The funds that were supposed to pay for the rental of the special typewriter that punched the paper tape, the salaries of the typists, the conversion expenses, consultants' fees, and the preparation of published compilations, were almost completely consumed in the machine rental alone, forcing us to divert other moneys into this expensive and time consuming project.

We eventually completed the conversion to magnetic tape, but never did reach the stage of a finished publication. Years later we learned that there had been xeroxed copies of the ledgers available, and we could have saved an enormous amount of time had we been able to work directly from them rather than from the eye-straining microfilms. Some years after the conclusion of the Genett project, the Country Music Foundation committed itself to undertaking the complete pre-1942 hillbilly discography, hiring English discographer Tony Russell as the project editor. With its own extensive resources, supplemented by funds from other agencies, the CMF commanded a better position than the JEMF's for tackling the large effort. Nevertheless, today, twenty years after JEMF took its first steps toward the discography, there is still no publication available—though word has it that the compilation is some ninety to ninety-five percent complete.

Early in 1969, subscribers to the *Newsletter* were surprised to receive instead of the publication to which they were accustomed, a new periodical, with a heavy wrap-around cover with a quaint pen-and-ink sketch of a primitive recording machine (by bluegrass guitarist Sandy Rothman), called the *JEMF Quarterly*. Inside the front cover, following the identification of the editor, appeared the standard sentence, "Please address all manuscripts and other communications to..." The significance of the common instruction is that previously the *Newsletter* asked only for correspondence, not manuscripts. In my editorial I explained to readers that we felt we had outgrown the format of a house organ and that the old title no longer seemed appropriate. I also noted that we now encouraged readers' contributions in the form of letters, discographies, biographical accounts, song studies, or other forms. Furthermore, I reminded readers that "...although the emphasis of the *Newsletter* remained hillbilly music, we will welcome contributions in parallel areas of commercially recorded folk music: blues, cajun, folk-rock, etc."

Although my editorial prompted no immediate readers' comments, over the next several years we frequently received angry letters from long-time subscribers who

were canceling their subscriptions because *JEMFQ* was moving away from the "golden age" hillbilly music so dear to the heart of John Edwards himself. In the Spring 1971 issue, we published for the first time such a letter from a dissatisfied reader—and a very knowledgeable student of hillbilly music at that. In an editorial following the letter I tried to indicate the reasons for our position, but evidently many readers each year failed to see the logic in my arguments, and bitterly denounced JEMF and its officers as being disloyal to John Edwards' memory.

Occasionally other matters prompted readers to express their dissatisfaction—three that I recall were (1) a critical review of a bluegrass songbook, which earned a vituperative denunciation from the book's author, (2) an article on the cowboy ballad, "The Strawberry Roan," which included a particularly graphic bawdy version of the song—some readers expressed mortification that we should have published such obscenities in *JEMFQ*, and (3) an article by an Austin, Texas, bartender who had a bit part in the film, *Outlaw Blues*. Once again the complaint resounded that *JEMFQ* was straying unconscionably from its proper sphere of activity—old time hillbilly music. But apart from a few such instances, *JEMFQ*'s readers generally kept their complaints—if they had any—to themselves, expressed only implicitly in their neglecting to renew expired subscriptions at the appropriate time.

Through most of the 1970s, "editing" *JEMFQ* meant much more than just touching up manuscripts and proof-reading camera-ready copy. In addition to those usual editorial duties, I found myself writing most—if not all—of the book and record reviews because the effort of securing reliable and timely reviews from guest contributors often exceeded the amount of time it would have taken me to write the reviews myself. I also contributed unsigned bibliographic notes, brief record and book notes and other announcements, as well as introductory statements to many articles and numerous discographies. The latter were not only compiled by me, but generally also typed by me, because the burden on a typist who was not an experienced discographer would have been excessive. (One former secretary of mine still recalls with anguish having to type—in Polish—a discography of fiddler Karol Stoch for the *Quarterly*.) Many of these chores could have been vastly simplified had we entered sooner into the era of the word processor, but this miraculous labor-saving device was not available to us until we moved production of the journal to MTSU.

By decade's end, we had four major publication ventures underway: the *Quarterly*, the Record Reissue Project, the Reprint Series, and the Special Series. At their inception, each of these constituted a major innovation in the scholarship of vernacular music; readers outside the close circle of JEMF advisors and friends remained unaware of the blood and sweat that accompanied the production of

most of those items. Gradually, I came to realize that something was going wrong; instead of having a steadily growing cadre of colleagues, students, and associates to assist in each new undertaking, we found that responsibilities came to fall increasingly on the shoulders of two or three individuals and no one else. If Ken Griffis and Archie Green had not been available, half of our projects could never have reached fruition. During the years that he served on JEMF's staff, Paul Wells remained an indispensable asset not only in the Record Reissue Project but also in the *Quarterly* and other undertakings.

Ironically, as local participation in JEMF's operations dwindled, respect and admiration for our accomplishments increased around the world. Every week's mail brought in a variety of requests from scholars, writers, or fans. Some requested material, photographs, or dubs of recordings to be used for serious academic studies or forthcoming commercial publications. (Unlike other sound recording archives, we always maintained a policy of willingness to copy recordings with no more paperwork than a signed assurance that the items would not be used for commercial purposes. Some archives even required a signed release from the original manufacturer of the record.) Other requests came from high school or college students—sometimes so vaguely general as to defy response ("Please send me everything you have on country music..."). Many letters came from barely literate fans: "Please send me a list of all recordings by Ernest Tubbs..."; or "I want to get all recordings by Hank Williams; please tell me what you have..." Frequently we received requests for evaluating records or entire collections—sometimes on the skimpiest of information. "I have a box of very old rare recordings by Paul Whiteman, Guy Lombardo, and Frank Sinatra. Can you tell me how much they are worth?"

As we struggled to accommodate such requests without getting bogged down in correspondence, it became apparent that other organizations in other parts of the world were picking up the ball over which JEMF was beginning to lose control. Tony Russell's London-based periodical, *Old Time Music*, had begun covering with great success the subject matter of early country music. The Country Music Foundation's own *Journal of Country Music*, after some feeble false starts, finally began to make a decent showing in the limited field of contemporary country music. The CMF, with the Nashville-based country music industry at its back door (if not in its pocket), could draw upon that industry for support in a way that JEMF never could, and it became clear to us that JEMF's role in providing a scholarly view of modern country music would probably be taken over by the CMF. Other academic institutions—the Blue Ridge Institute, the Country Music Foundation, and the University of North Carolina among them—were stepping into the arena of record projects and issuing some

outstanding albums, extensively and handsomely documented, of both contemporary and archival recordings.

By 1979 I found myself losing interest in attending to all the timely details that editing a quarterly journal entails, and it became apparent to me that it would be in the publication's best interests to find another arrangement for its production. At that juncture Patricia Atkinson Wells stepped in and took over many of the editorial responsibilities. The following year she and Linda Painter divided up most of the editor's tasks between themselves, giving me the luxury of having only to oversee operations and make some policy decisions now and then. Linda continued in this capacity until we transferred production to Paul Wells at MTSU.

Whenever I now look back at old issues of the *Quarterly*, I invariably wince as my eye falls on a typo that somehow had eluded the editorial eye. Apart from this annoyance, I am struck with the breadth of material that we did manage to encompass notwithstanding the limitations of manpower and money that constrained us. Although we alienated many readers by our gradual movement away from country music as our exclusive interest, I feel that we provided the first public forum for serious articles on many aspects of vernacular music. Our first article on blues music in 1970 may not have been ground-breaking, but our first bibliographies on rock music in 1972 and on a folk revival performer in 1976 became early serious contributions to those fields, and our biography/discography on a Polish-American fiddler opened up new territory in 1977.

Thus, when the JEMFQ is supplanted by the Center for Popular Music's own *American Vernacular Music*, I don't feel that our work will have come to a dead end, but rather that it will have found itself on a new highway.

The John Edwards Memorial Collection—An Update

Mike Casey

“One of the world’s great collections of Southern and country music has come home, and therein lies a ballad. Early one morning in late April, a truck from California rolled into Chapel Hill, bringing the John Edwards Memorial Collection—nearly a thousand boxes of old 78 rpm phonograph records, sheet music, and faded letters—to its new and permanent home at the University of North Carolina.” (*Southern Changes*, July/August 1983)

Over six years ago this news item announced the relocation of the John Edwards Memorial Foundation’s archive from UCLA to UNC-Chapel Hill. Today, the JEMC is the major component of the southern Folklife Collection, which is located in Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The collection is ready once again to begin public service after years of planning and reorganization—and therein lies a story as well.

In the fall of 1986, the Edwards Collection was placed under the administrative control of the Manuscripts Department (which includes the well-known and respected Southern Historical Collection) in the university’s library system, along with the UNC Folklore Archives. The Folklore Archives—begun nearly twenty years ago by faculty members of the Curriculum in Folklore—includes holdings of commercial LPs and field recordings. The archives are strong in most southern traditions, especially old-time string bands, blues, pre-blues black secular music, and religious song, narrative, and services from both white and black traditions. These materials form an excellent complement to the JEMC. The two collections were brought together under the name “Southern Folklife Collection” to form one unified, subject-based special collection that extensively documents all forms of southern traditional music and narrative. With the appointment of a permanent, full-time staff person in January 1987, we began the long process of reorganizing and setting up the collection to professional archival standards to prepare for public service.

This past year has marked a significant turning point in the long history of the John Edwards Memorial Collection and the UNC Folklore Archives. From a collection of half-unopened boxes and aging, deteriorating equipment located in the basement of the Undergraduate Library, the Southern Folklife Collection has been transformed into a functioning special collection/sound archive. The SFC is now located in new quarters in Wilson Library, is fully unpacked and better organized, and includes a studio that allows us to preserve, restore, and make accessible the more than 30,000 sound recordings of traditional south-

ern music that make up the collection. Our studio is modest—it includes a Technics SP-10MK3 turntable, Owl restoration preamp and multifilter, Keith-Monks style record cleaning machine, and two Otari MX5050 B-II open reel tape machines—but it allows us to accomplish basic professional work with the recordings. Materials are housed in climate-controlled stacks with room for future growth, and our work area contains plenty of space for processing and for indexing sound recordings on the collection’s IBM PC AT—soon to be connected to the Department’s local area network. SFC researchers work in the Department’s attractive public service area in the newly-renovated section of Wilson Library, and have access to several enclosed rooms that contain cassette decks. Although much retrospective work remains to be done, we have come a long way.

Our efforts to prepare the collection for public service gained a significant boost in January 1987, when we received a two-year grant from the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation in California. This grant allowed us to undertake a microcomputer-based indexing project for our entire field tape collection and approximately half of our LP collection. We now have access to over 1,500 recordings from these two collections on such fields as title, date recorded, artists, race, gender, geographic area, instrumentation, style of music, and others. This does not include our collections of 78s and 45s to which we have basic access as well, or the first 2,000 items of our LP collection to which we have a card catalog and listening cassettes. The Skaggs grant also allowed us to purchase some of the audio and video equipment needed to make these materials accessible to staff and researchers. The grant project will run until the end of 1989.

Research use of the SFC has been steady this year despite the fact that the collection has received virtually no outside publicity. Although the collection is still technically closed and partly inaccessible, we have worked hard to provide reference services to researchers who find their way to us. Researchers that we have recently assisted include many UNC-Chapel Hill undergraduate and graduate students completing class papers, a graduate student in the university’s School of Library Science completing a master’s paper on John Edwards, a staff member of the Southern Oral History Project who used recordings from the collection on the Studs Terkel radio show in Chicago, doctoral candidates at several southern universities, professors in music and folklore at two major universities researching black musical traditions for upcoming books, a free-lance writer from Wisconsin searching for sources

on Grafton Recording Studios for an article, and musicians playing traditional music who are interested in particular regional styles. We have served researchers from France, Hungary, Australia, England, New Zealand, Canada, and Germany this year, as well as visitors from all regions of the United States.

Although we have been fortunate to receive support from the Skaggs Foundation, the Record Bar, and the University Library for the purchase of equipment and the undertaking of indexing and cataloging projects, much remains to be done. We hope that users of the collection will understand that with our small staff it is not always possible to answer requests as fast as we would like. Limited computer time, a critical issue in any sound archive, prevents us from taking on additional projects that require database work. We have purchased some of the audio and video equipment needed for both staff use in

indexing holdings and researcher use in the public service area, but there are many items that we do not have the funds to purchase. Finally, we have limited funds for the acquisition of new materials, and must rely heavily on donations to build the collection.

To solve some of these problems, and to enable the collection to fulfill the promise the scholars, collectors, enthusiasts, and others have seen in it for nearly thirty years, Archie Green and Eugene Earle, founding members of the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, have established an endowment fund. Subscribers to the *Quarterly* and others interested in the collection will know that they can make contributions to the John Edwards Memorial Collection Fund in care of the Southern Folklife Collection at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Contributions to the fund will be used to provide for critical staffing, equipment, and acquisitions needs.

Graphics #68: Winding Down

Archie Green

The time has come to wind down the JEMF graphics series. I did not know in January 1968 that I had undertaken a two-decade task, nor that I would be gathering pictures and penning commentary in Urbana, Philadelphia, Washington, Columbus, Louisville, and Austin. I write this last feature back home in San Francisco. It is the summer of 1987; I have reached my 70th birthday—a good platform from which to look back at a twenty-year project.

Close readers of the *JEMF Quarterly* may have noticed an uneven pulse throughout the series as I responded variously to changes in locale and employment. At times, I had considerable leisure to gather a set of illustrations and to puzzle their meaning; at times, caught up by other projects, I was not able to step beyond tentative conclusions about particular drawings or recordings. Mainly, these commentaries have grown as I have sought to enlarge my vision in responding to vernacular music.

From its inception after John Edwards's death (24 December 1960, Paramatta, Australia), the founders of the John Edwards Memorial Foundation—now, Forum—worked to raise the sights of collectors of old-time recorded music. JEMF president Eugene Earle has indicated that, in correspondence with Edwards during the 1950s, John stimulated Gene to turn from fan enthusiasm to discographical/biographical/historical research. If a single statement can sum up our mission it is that of bringing challenging perspectives to sound-recording study.

Ed Kahn, then a graduate student in folklore at UCLA, undertook the task of chartering the JEMF as a non-profit, educational foundation. Incorporated on 19 July 1962, we "moved into" quarters at UCLA's Folklore Center during the following year. We mimeographed our first modest *Newsletter* in October 1965; with this opening issue, Ed Kahn and Norm Cohen assumed editorial duties.

Two events marked the JEMF's strategy of looking beyond the grooves of individual discs. In our lean starting years, the Newport Folk Foundation gave us a pilot grant of \$5000.00. It seemed appropriate that a bit of the profit from the nation's major "folk festival" would go to study recorded music in all its modes of presentation. During August 1964, Peter Tamony, San Francisco etymologist, donated 2,600 race records to the JEMF. Consequently, John Edwards's Anglo-American core collection shared shelf space with Tamony's African-American treasures. The physical juxtaposition of these discs signalled our probing into the convergence of cultural forces in the United States.

I have sketched but a few background markers for my series's inception. Specifically, in 1966, I had responded to our *Newsletter's* lack of illustrations. Working as a librarian at the University of Illinois, I corresponded with Norm Cohen in Los Angeles about this need. We agreed upon a picture series keyed to sound recordings. Accordingly, I took a black-and-white Okeh advertisement (*Atlanta Constitution* 3 August 1923) to an Urbana lithograph shop and ordered a ream of reproductions—brown ink on canary paper, 8 1/2 x 11 inches in size. Actually, I had worked from a microfilm reel, to a single selected frame, to an enlarged glossy photo, to an aluminum plate, to offset reproduction.

With excitement, I boxed and mailed these reconstituted ads to UCLA. Norm, then, provided the title: "Commercial Music Graphics." An introductory statement asserted that ephemeral handbills, placards, circulars, posters, throwaways, flyers, and tonighters served as visual documents parallel to vocal documents. Previously, I had learned from Peter Tamony his coinage "vocumentary" to denominate Bessie Smith's "Gimme a Pigfoot"—a colloquial song text captured in a disc's grooves. As a ballad scholar, I wished to use pictorials to fill out accounts of "the music industry's encounter with folk culture."

To preface this closing report for the graphics series, we reproduce the 1923 Okeh ad in its original newspaper black-and-white format. During 1967, I had noted that hillbilly music's first phonograph record by Fiddlin' John Carson appeared, not with a mountain or rural symbol but, rather, under portraits of Byron Warner's Seven Aces, an Atlanta hotel jazz band. The ad listed six then-new popular and two old-time discs: Carson's "The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane"/"The Old Hen Cackled and the Rooster's Going to Crow"; Morehouse College Male Quartet's "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"/"Down by the Riverside."

At this juncture, I need not recapitulate Carson's career as we have an excellent biography, *Fiddlin' Georgia Crazy* by Gene Wiggins. Present-day country-music study, exemplified by Wiggins and his peers, resembles a rich web of multiple strands. As I prepared graphics articles over the years, I saw them as strands in this web. Rather than offering a summary of decades of research, I append below a checklist of dates and titles for the full series, #1 through #68, as well as a select reference list.

On occasion, readers have asked how I "got into" the field of art or music, or the two combined. Without probing inchoate feelings, I can state that affection for folk



WARNER'S SEVEN ACES

Atlanta's Winning Combination Now on Okeh Records

OVER 1,000,000 people in the South have been thrilled with the music of Warner's Seven Aces, as broadcasted from Atlanta by the Constitution.

Now, this same audience can select on Okeh Records the latest dance music by their favorite dance orchestra.

Try Any One of These

6 BEST SELLERS

4585 10-10 75c	IN A TENT—Fox Trot Warner's Seven Aces	4582 10-10 75c	HENPECKED BLUES—Fox Trot Gwynn's Paradise Orchestra
	EDDIE STEADY—Fox Trot Warner's Seven Aces		LOUISVILLE LOU—Fox Trot Gwynn's Paradise Orchestra
4576 10-10 75c	YES! WE HAVE NO BANANAS— Tenor with Orchestra—Billy Jones	4581 10-10 75c	YES! WE HAVE NO BANANAS— Fox Trot—Vincent Lopez and His Hotel Pennsylvania Orchestra
	MAGGIE (Yes, Ma'am) (Come Right Upstairs)—Soprano—Tenor—Duet with Orchestra		LONG LOST MANIA (Daddy Misses You)—Vincent Lopez and His Hotel Pennsylvania Orchestra
4580 10-10 75c	THE LITTLE OLD LOG CABIN IN THE LAND—Fiddling Solo Vocal Chorus—Fiddling John Carson of Atlanta	4587 10-10 75c	SWING LOW, SWEET CHARIOT Colored Male Quartette, Atlanta Moorehouse Quartette
	THE OLD HEN CACKLED AND THE ROOSTER'S GOING TO CROW—Fiddling Solo Vocal Chorus—Fiddling John Carson of Atlanta		DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE Colored Male Quartette, Atlanta Moorehouse Quartette

For Sale By Your Neighborhood Dealer

Atlanta Phonograph Co.
15 North Pryor Street

James, Inc.
107 Peachtree Street

Carter Piano Co.
50 North Pryor Street

Walter Hughes Piano Co.
56 North Pryor Street

John L. Moore & Sons
83 Peachtree Street

Mink Shop
118 Peachtree Avenue

Ruby Music Co.
23 Decatur Street

LeRoy Webb & Co.
16 Auburn Avenue

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The Records of Quality

BUY OKEH NEEDLES FOR YOUR PHONOGRAPH
Uniform Points—Uniform Lengths—Perfect Reproduction

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sounds and sights goes far back to childhood. Long before I could identify any musical genre, I liked radio cowboy fare. Harry "Haywire Mac" McClintock stands out as the earliest star I associate with a given performing style. In short, broadcasts firmed my motion of authenticity before Hollywood introduced singing cowboys via film soundtracks.

During college years, 1935-39, I had attended fund raising events for Spanish Civil War Loyalists, as well as for migratory workers ("Okies") new in California. At these benefits, I heard radical songs, but was unsure about their relationship to the ballads of Harry McClintock, Jules Allen, or Carl Sprague. After college, a Civilian Conservation Corps camp on the Klamath River became a "home away from home." Returning to San Francisco, I took up the shipwright trade and, later, Navy duty. Within this time span, recorded folk music continued its deep appeal. In previous *JEMFQ* features, I have described feelings upon first hearing songs by race or hillbilly artists within reissue albums drawn from early 78-RPM discs.

To illustrate: Victor's albums, *Smoky Mountain Ballads* (P-79) and Leadbelly's *The Midnight Special* (P-50), appeared as I began to turn waterfront earnings into personal tools. Alan Lomax, in liner notes, then stated that Leadbelly's prison songs cried for freedom. John Lomax, in commentary on Uncle Dave Macon, the Dixon Brothers, and others, stated that the Smoky Mountain songs invoked the "same sense of freedom and abounding life as I have felt among their [Macon, et al] native mountains." Such notes by John and Alan Lomax, father and son, helped me sort out plural values in folksong, and posed for me the contrast between a cowboy lament and a CIO battle cry.

I cannot now explain the exact transformation of Leadbelly's "Grey Goose" (P-50) or Dorsey Dixon's "Intoxicated Rat" (P-79) into "freedom songs." In fact, in personal speech, I did not use the tags "freedom," "people's," or "protest" to modify folksong. Without trouble, I did come to see Leadbelly's goose as symbolic of both black defiance and endurance; I was far less assured of Dixon's rat's significance. Fortified with spirits, the rat could take on the cat, but, when sober, the former had to scamper back to his hole. What message did Dorsey's song convey? For whom did he sing? How was I to relate his "Intoxicated Rat" to militant calls by the Wobblies (Industrial Workers of the World)—songs to fan the flames of discontent?

During the New Deal era, Negro work songs and Appalachian lyric tunes had become emblems of democratic art for many young people. In my case, a post office mural, and FSA photo, a David Stone Martin album cover, a Ben Shahn canvas, or a Tom Benton lithograph helped pull together aural/visual expression and political statement. These vivid pictures correlated with a first vote for Frank-

lin Delano Roosevelt, with joining the Shipwright's Union, and with Navy enlistment. Folk music—rooted in community experience and performed in authentic voice—then seemed to me to be a sign of expansion of personal and philosophical consciousness (although, I did not know the phrase "mind expansion" as a shibboleth).

From today's vantage point, I can look back at the many guises in which folksongs have appeared to me: the "Midnight Special" clearly pictured a prisoner's hope; "Which Side Are You On?" showed stark ideological choice; "Careless Love" flashed both temptation and warning; "Away Rio" made work at sea look gentle; "Big Rock Candy Mountain" articulated utopian fantasy; the "Intoxicated Rat" signalled ambiguity in the face of resolution. This rainbow of song titles/mind pictures helps recall the impulse that sparked my quest to correlate musical and iconographic document.

Parallel to childhood response to cowboy music, I had become conscious of visual art's affective power. My parents often took my two sisters and me to the Los Angeles County Museum. Like other youngsters, I gravitated to displays of dinosaur bones and medieval armor, while nearby art galleries made me aware of Sierra landscapes, historical portraits, and strange nudes. To create a "museum scrapbook" at home, sister Judy encouraged me to clip pages from magazines: the staid *Literary Digest*, the avant-garde *Vanity Fair*. This early practice of clipping/sorting served me well later in shaping graphics contributions.

During high-school years, 1933-35, I first noticed advertisements for recorded music in newspapers and journals. Of course, such ads had appeared in previous decades. We all must reach private thresholds of receptivity to mark awakenings. Also, at that time, I began to read magazine articles pointing to an analytic stance on musical subjects. Charles Edward Smith's "Collecting Hot" gave me a sense of jazz as a subject for discourse. As well, Smith made me want to go junking for rarities. A few years later, E. Simms Campbell contributed several reports to *Esquire* on hot jazz and down-home blues; he illustrated these with his own dramatic watercolors. Campbell added to my musical sophistication; I added his appealing art to my scrapbook.

During the war years, David Stone Martin undertook for Asch and Stinson albums a set of eye-catching drawings of jazz and blues performers. About 1945, Norman Granz commissioned Martin to illustrate a cover for his first *Jazz at the Philharmonic* set. Friends in school years, Granz and I attended concerts and lectures together, and explored ideological horizons. I applauded his choice of Martin as an "in-house" artist for Verve and other labels. Martin leaned to abstraction, thus opening vistas for me in phonograph album design.

I can no longer date precisely my belief that an album

cover (78-rpm discs) ought to complement included songs. Somehow, I had stumbled into a troublesome esthetic arena. We look at art, we listen to music. These sensory experiences seem far apart; indeed, opposites. Further, a painting on canvas lives in physical space; a song lives in time, reborn with each performance. How then does a visual artist transform a song? As viewers, we wish a phonograph record cover to depict, literally, a ballad's narrative line or, metaphorically, its lyric mood. Over the years, such matters have entered my graphics features; sometimes stated explicitly, sometimes, muted.

During college years, folksong albums holding memorable covers caught my eye. One that continues to attract is Leadbelly's *Negro Sinful Songs* (Musicraft 31)—a photo of four cotton pickers in a field with a log cabin in the background. I do not know its source but, in 1939, it functioned for me (and perhaps, others) as an intrinsic social statement on black folklife. Indeed, the Musicraft cover resembled the then-familiar New Deal documentary photographs. Those released by the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration served to confirm large societal values for many New Deal partisans.

Before leaving San Francisco in 1959 for the University of Illinois, I took up a compelling subject, the origin and meaning of the term "hillbilly music." Asking why this tag, both fighting and funny, stuck to a vibrant form of traditional music, I presented early findings at the Modern Language Association meeting in Washington, DC (1962). I cherish the memory of Pop Stoneman and Tony Alderman braving a snowstorm to attend the session. The completed paper, "Hillbilly Music: Source and Symbol," helped others in their studies.

While researching naming events for records, I discovered the trade journal *Talking Machine World* for the years 1920-1930. Finding the huge bound volumes at the University of Chicago "storage" library, I scoured a decade's run, page by page. In the 1930s, firms such as Okeh, Columbia, Vocalion, Victor, and Edison had submitted a number of stories on old-time music as well as full-page ads to TMW. It struck me that these handsome advertisements deserved exposure to new audiences. Accordingly, at the University of Illinois photo lab, I ordered a set of glossy prints of ads which had announced race and hillbilly discs. Graphics #2 (September, 1967) featured an Okeh page on Fiddlin' John Carson and Henry Whitter. Graphics #3 (December, 1967) displayed a Columbia page, "The fiddle and guitar craze is sweeping northward" (both ads for TMW, 15 June 1924).

The Columbia copy writer who asserted this northward sweep for rural and mountain sounds had Atlanta in mind as a 1924 recording center. In retrospect, we know that folk and folk-derived music lived in every nook and cranny of the United States. After "Haywire Mac" recorded in Oakland, 1928, his songs on discs could ride

east by rail. Mississippi bluesman and Texas corrido singers journeyed by box car and day coach to Chicago studios. Their race and Spanish-language records returned home, often by Railway Express. Cajuns recorded in Louisiana as well as in Texas and New York. Indeed, fiddle and guitar music swept north and south, east and west.

Attention to geography helps us follow local and regional artists across the continent, moving their down-home music into new parlors and onto unfamiliar platforms. Part of the JEMF's purpose has been the explication of industry's role in commodifying American vernacular music and in expanding its audience. This matter of buyer and seller returns us to art on album covers—art intended both to picture the ambience of "homegrown" music and to market such "products."

Not all ballad scholars welcome entrapment in dualistic eddies of home community versus commercial mart. We encounter similar polarities constantly: culture authentic vs. culture spurious, universal vs. particular, nationalism vs. pluralism. However, some folksong teachers do plunge into large pools, asserting, for example, the unitary appeal of favorite numbers linked to monistic explanations for music's power. Nevertheless, experience has warned me that even such "star" ballads as "Barbara Allen" or "John Henry" remain unknown to many citizens. Thus, I have shaped these graphics explorations in terms of limited audience, partial affect, and diverse values within the polity. In short, something as direct as a sales handbill has led to notions of complexity over singularity, of kaleidoscope over magnifying glass.

While "seeing" music and "hearing" art, I have also been receptive to symbolic realms. The matter of cowboys both as mythic figures and mythmakers has long held my attention, as had the emotion-laden interchange in roles between blackface minstrel comic and dandy. Beyond aural/visual specific translations, I have also imagined this whole series (#1 through #68) variously as Biblical coat, or a museum exhibition. Each pictured song has served as a Jacob's patch: square, circle, forest green, turkey red. Each album-cover drawing has doubled as a hanging upon an elegant gallery wall. Obviously, the metaphors to sum up a twenty-year effort come more easily in 1987 than in 1967, for at the start, I could not anticipate an incremental series, nor did I search for a guiding thread.

A word on deadlines and guides may help readers in their own assessments. Although we tried to keep the *JEMF Quarterly* to a regular schedule, events intervened to slow our tasks. Yet for two decades, I faced sixty-eight deadlines, one for each feature. The grinding necessity to get these graphics into the mail reinforced feelings of fragmentation in writing. Each commentary, at its time, seemed to stand alone, supported only by a mini-thesis. Trips to post offices from coast to coast precluded sensing an underlying plan for a unified series. Only when James

Porter requested a contribution to a festschrift for Bertrand Bronson (1983), did I write "A Folk Music Exhibition," drawing together diverse elements from previous graphics.

Looking back at this series's origin and intent, as well as matters of meaning, I turn now to several wind-down vignettes. Eight pictures appear below, not ordered by their respective dates of publication. Rather, they follow a personal circular chronology: fan, collector, commentator, fan.

1) Radio Cowboy

Our family acquired its first radio about 1925. I recall Mother's dismay when batteries under the set's cabinet leaked acid onto the parlor floor; however, I have no memory of how cowboy music leaked into my senses. Harry McClintock and Stuart Hamblen stand out from early years. These performers in cowboy garb sang ballads which, years later, teachers identified as folk and traditional. The Beverly Hill Billies, a Los Angeles radio cowboy band, introduced me to the word "hillbilly," while songs from Appalachia, some deriving from Britain, came to me under the general rubric "cowboy music." In short, as a youngster, radio cowboys prepared me for long years of attention to folk music.

At this point, I need not detail McClintock's vivid adventures as boomer and busker. Rather, readers can turn with great profit to Henry Young's booklet, *Haywire Mac and the Big Rock Candy Mountain*. Young, a retired Santa Fe Railway locomotive engineer, wrote and published this biography as a tribute to a fellow worker.

McClintock made his radio debut (KFRC, San Francisco) in April 1925, on "The Coo-Coo Club," a children's program. He opened with "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum," a classic he had composed (perhaps out of traditional elements) in 1907 for the IWW. Over the years, Mac asserted that he had been radio's first cowboy singer, and that his "Haywire Orchestra" was the first cowboy band to broadcast. Of course, he used this tag broadly to include hill, range, hobo, and novelty songs.

During 1928, KFRC inaugurated "The Blue Monday Jamboree," a two-hour clambake of stars and comics: Harrison Holloway, Phil Harris, Meredith Wilson (of *The Music Man* fame), "Pedro," "Frank Wantanabe," "Lord Bilgewater," and "Haywire Mac." In January 1930, KFRC joined the CBS national network; "The Blue Monday Jamboree" set standards for live comedy, fresh music, and a variety-show format in radio's golden days. Mac continued broadcasting until television's formative period. Just a few years before his death at age seventy-four (24 April 1957), he appeared on several TV pilots with Meredith Wilson and other old friends.

The illustration reproduced here dates to 1929. I believe that KFRC mailed copies of this photo upon request to Mac's many radio fans. It reminds us, today, of the larger size of a studio-based "cowboy" band before western swing emerged as a distinct country genre. As a youngster in California, I held no visual image of Nashville musicians or of Appalachian string bands. Hence, the association that Mac firmed of cowboy garb with "down-home" style has served me well for six decades.

2) Jam Session

Why have publishers not issued a coffee-table anthology holding depictions of jazz? The roster of painters and printmakers intrigued by such music is awesome: Picasso, Leger, Matisse, Covarrubias, Davis, Shahn, Bearden, Dehn, Matulka—to name a few. Their works range from modest print to huge mural; their styles spill from modernity's horn. In 1919, Man Ray offered a drawing named "Jazz": airbrush with thin pen lines, a machine-like abstraction of musical instruments. Did Ray, seven decades back, head the list of fine artists who employed the word "jazz" in a title for visual art?

E. Simms Campbell and David Stone Martin oriented me to jazz/blues illustrations in my years of first exploring such music. About 1935, I became aware of swing as a discrete entity; about 1939, I attended a funky jam session; about 1946, I heard strange bop sounds. Now I find it difficult to turn the calendar back to pinpoint exact dates for hearing Duke Ellington's big band, Saunders King's tight combo, or Joe Turner's powerful blues shouting. WPA Theater productions of musical extravaganzas such as *The Hot Mikado*, *Jump for Joy*, and *Run Little Children* brought me great joy. Peter Tamony and I met at the Dawn Club (San Francisco) during 1941 at a Lou Watters and his Yerba Buena Jazz Band evening. In time, Peter led me to an understanding of complementary expressive forms, music, and speech. Musical iconology followed.

Between 1935 and 1939, Fred Becker completed a number of jazz-theme woodcuts for the WPA Federal Art Project. Born in Oakland, 1913, he lived in New York during the Depression era. There, he became a jazz fan, and, in his words, "followed" 48th Street club performers "uptown" to Harlem after-hour spots. In WPA engravings, he extended previous realism (represented by his woodcut teacher, J.J. Lankes) to abstract form and surreal statement. During 1978, while working on John Henry (Graphics #48), I reached Becker by telephone at his home in Amherst. He shared thoughts about how the John Henry legend had intersected the artist's response to jazz.

Here, I thank Becker for permission to reproduce the WPA woodcut, "Jam Session." It appeared about 1937 in a series with similar cuts: "Clambake," "Piano Player,"

"Drummer," "Guitar Player," "Trombone Player," "Beale Street Blues." Of these Becker works, I select "Jam Session" as a reminder of marvel on first hearing a continuous session of seamless music, and of adding "jam" to my vocabulary as an active verb. Most importantly, Becker's woodcut tells me again that musicians and artists in their representations can go beyond the obvious to realms of the grotesque and the irrational.

3) Meeting Moe

Growing up in California, I knew very little of our country east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. While in the Navy, I reached New York in spring 1944. Much of this trip has vanished down memory lane, except a visit with Moses Asch in his original Stella Brooks Recording Studio (117 West 46th Street). Curiosity led me to the man then immersed in folksong issues with Asch Records. Unable to peer into a crystal ball, I did not anticipate a professional commitment to folklore. Hence, I brought nothing for him to edit; nor did I make any special demand on his extensive knowledge. Moe may have been amused by a young carpenter's mate just dropping in to chat.

Not until 1964 did I actually work on a Folkways album, *Tipple, Loom and Rail* (FH 5237), in which Mike Seeger presented a group of southern occupational songs. A colleague at Illinois, Doyle Moore, then prepared a memorable collage design for the jacket cover, while I sent Moe camera-ready brochure copy. From time-to-time, Asch and I exchanged research information.

Sing Out (May 1977) carried a tiny line drawing by Don Freeman of Asch, "In the Recording Booth." It caught my eye in that few artists had ever pictured the actual recording process. In several letters to Moe, I tried to learn the circumstance leading to this piece. Not until June 1983, did Asch reveal that Freeman had prepared the sketch for *PM*, an innovative newsprint magazine (tabloid format), published in Manhattan during the war years. Moe did not date the specific *PM* issue.

Perhaps we can yet learn why and when a *PM* editor steered Don Freeman to Asch's first studio. Did Freeman complete the sketch on assignment in connection with a *PM* feature article on Moe's early work? Or, did the illustrator work freelance without a direct link to *PM*? For the present, I offer the drawing here to honor the late Moses Asch, a giant in folksong recording. As well, Freeman's depiction may stimulate a hunt for similar art detailing the sound recording process.

4) Blue Bird Flyer

My conscious search for sound recording printed ephemera began in the years 1954-1957. Then, I groped to

connect several experiences: learning a trade, absorbing labor union tradition, gathering folksong records, wondering how best to comment on vernacular song. Seeking to link these matters, I undertook a coal-mine discography. In time, I sent preliminary lists and a paper on Gene Autry's "Death of Mother Jones" to George Korson. As the pioneer in American industrial folklore studies, Korson set very high standards in his identification with working people and clarity in presenting their lore.

Before the formation of the JEMF, I had met Bob Pinson and Fred Hoeptner at Jack's Record Cellar (San Francisco). Proprietor Norman Pierce encouraged me to correspond with Gene Earle in Florida who, in turn, suggested that I write to John Edwards in Australia. These five collectors shaped my initial discographical findings. By turning to case studies of individual songs (including attention to catalogs, brochures, and similar sales material) I could situate each song in a wide setting of social history and literary landscape.

The Blue Bird flyer, reproduced here, dates to 1938; it is typical of hundreds, if not thousands, of related items. No one counted all these publications as they tumbled from the press. This particular flyer remains in mind for announcing Bluebird 7718, Jazz Gillum's "I'm That Man Down in the Mine." My attention to songs of coal persisted for years. Today, I see the flyer's other faces. Unlike similar announcements, it holds no obvious stereotypical art. In brief span, the flyer includes seven musical subgenres: hillbilly, organ, sacred, vocal (pop), band (schottische, varsoviana), race, Cajun.

In 1938, the RCA Victor publicists responsible for this flyer understood it to be an ephemeral sales tool. Did anyone at Victor anticipate the value of memorabilia in archives? From today's perspective, this particular flyer speaks to matters of American culture pluralism. Literally, its announced songs shift our attention from "Knoxville Girl" to "Broadway Mama" and from "Mon Cour Me Fais Ci Mal" to "Yonder Comes My Lord with a Bible in His Hand." Other viewer/listeners will use such titles to chart their own way into American experience.

5) Maine Fiddler

On opening this series, I dealt with recording pioneers from the 1920s, touching mainly discographical/biographical concerns. Over the years, key issues implicit in ballad study (origin, structure, use, meaning) surfaced in my commentaries. In turn, these matters led to unanticipated corners in arts and letters. Like other cultural documentarians, I raised typical questions. When does a characteristic style emerge? How "old" is old-time music? Can we unearth the foundation blocks for a musical genre? Who chooses to label "new" idioms? Where do we search out

the earliest pictures of string or blues band members, of balladeers, of midnight ramblers, and of their auditors?

Circumstance selects its own rules and orders its own priorities. By chance, one finds a picture which impels questions. Conversely, nagging questions force one into picture search. I have employed no special technique, allowing the interplay of art and music to shape past JEMFQ features. Nor can I assert a "final" end to each commentary, for many have pointed to fresh inquiries.

In "Portraits of Appalachian Musicians" (#49), I treated frontiersmen in fringed buckskin, fictive cousins to Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett. One pictorial item of a Kentucky settler on the Upper Missouri River came from the pen of Felix Octavius Carr Darley, a major book and journal illustrator of the nineteenth century. With "Dan Tucker in Roanoke" (#58), I added seven full-page engravings made from his drawings. Here, I reproduce a single Darley: Tony Washington, a Negro fiddler and barber in a New England village after the American Revolution.

Tony deserves full attention by Paul Wells who has made New England fiddling a special province. Hence, I limit remarks to the time and place of Tony's performance and a few background details. Sylvester Judd (1813-1853) converted from Calvinism to Unitarianism in 1840. Preaching in Maine (August), he espoused pacifism, temperance, and abolitionism. In *Margaret: A Tale of the Real and Ideal* (1845), Judd set utopian values within a backwoods village. Seldom read today, this novel, upon appearance, struck critics as a valued contribution to an emerging American literature.

Felix Darley, already lauded as an illustrator, requested and received Judd's permission to depict his novel's scenes. *Compositions in Outline from Judd's Margaret* (1856) resulted, an unbound portfolio with thirty lithograph plates by Konrad Huber (after Darley's line drawings). The technique of "compositions in outline," had been popularized in Europe by Moritz Retzsch. Such delicate pictures did not hold the vigor of Darley's characteristic figures, usually copied in bold wood engravings.

I have selected the Tony Washington illustration primarily because it pulls viewers back to the years 1784-1790, and to a black fiddler in Maine. A word on context: at times, Tony performs alone; at times, with Margaret's brother Chilion. Judd describes a Thanksgiving performance: "In a contradance to the 'Campbells are Coming,' never did plaided Highlander leap down his native rocks with more headlong steps than those same pied bumpkins sprang over that hall floor" (p. 55). Fortunately, we "hear" other song titles enjoyed in Margaret's community: "Peggy and Molly," "The Haymakers," "Come Haste to the Wedding."

Judd fills out Tony's character by noting his Revolutionary patriotism. "News of the battle of Lexington had

arrived [at Margaret's frontier settlement]; Tony...fiddler and drummer, had gone through the streets at midnight, sounding alarms from time to time" (p. 37). Additionally, we learn that Tony was versed in barbering tradition: "We used to perform surgery, phlebotomy, and blood-letting." He handles high rhetoric with great polish, identifying himself to Margaret as a D.D., Devil of a Doctor; A.B., Android Barberosum; S.T.D., Societates Tonsororum Dux (p. 180-181).

Tony Washington, fiddler, drummer, patriot, and man of words, deserves full treatment as do other folk musicians in American fiction and art. I present him as limned by Darley and Judd. This artist and author are not household names today. Maine remains distant to many citizens. The number of scholars studying New England fiddling is limited. Yet I have found, and continue to find, deep satisfaction in old illustrations—those posing questions about social interaction and concomitant culture formation.

6) Austin

I have had the good fortune to hear folk music throughout the land, and to assist several musicians with their LP albums. In travels, I have been lucky enough to have lived in Austin during the mid-1970s a time when country-rock rode high as an exciting blend of regional and ethnic musics. For more than a decade, this Texas city attracted goat roper and hippy dooper, cedar chopper and long hair, redneck and campus dude. I use these tags deliberately, for all circulated to describe a heady mix of Austin performers and audiences. Literally, more clubs beckoned than one could handle in a week of Sundays. The Armadillo World Headquarters, the Soap Creek Salon, the Split Rail Inn seemed especially open to musical creativity.

My initial response to Austin appeared in "Midnight and Other Cowboys" (#34); subsequently expanded for "Austin's Cosmic Cowboys: Words in Collision" in a festschrift for colleague Americo Paredes. I shall not condense the latter article; rather, I have selected but a single poster to look back at a rewarding sojourn.

Marcia Mouton Ball, a singer and pianist hailed from a Vinton, Louisiana, Cajun family. At LSU in 1968, she tried her hand in a "folk trio"; she followed campus gigs with a stint at "Joplin screaming" in Baton Rouge rock clubs. Coming to Austin in 1972, Marcia met Bobby Earl Smith, a country-western musician. They and a few friends formed Freda and the Firedogs, jumping eclectically into blues, boogies, and rockabilly. For the band's last appearance, at Willie Nelson's Bryan Springs picnic (1974), Marcia learned to yodel by adding Patsy Montana's "Cowboy's Sweetheart" to her repertoire. This became her theme song when the Firedogs reformed into a

country-rock band, Marcia Ball and the Misery Brothers. In the 1980s, Marcia returned to Louisiana sounds with a spicy mix of rhythm & blues, zydeco, and New Orleans jazz (all displayed on her current Rounder LP, *Hot Tamale Baby*).

Michael Priest, "dirt-poor" in childhood, reached Austin in 1969 by way of Alabama to Texas small-town migration. Liking "kicker" music and Austin's laid-back ambience, he turned his cartoonist's gifts to art for the Armadillo and other venues. Week after week, year after year, Priest completed posters intended initially for telephone pole and shop window. Today, these same dramatic posters belong in archive and museum. Priest's work held both documentary and oracular power in that he made visual a convergence of musical genres, as he gave form to often inchoate feelings of performers he knew and heard.

My nostalgic choice of one poster announcing Freda and the Firedogs (at Smithville's American Legion Hall, 14 April 1974) moves well away from the considerable social tension frequently captured by Austin's musicians. Priest could handle Austin liminality—performers and fans living on the threshold between rural home and urban highrise. In featuring Marcia as a comic-strip character, a cowgirl in glasses, with four huge Dalmatian hounds, Michael amplified a zany band title. This in-joke amused Marcia's fans, for she held no special claim to fire fighting fame. Perhaps my choice serves notice that musical humor touches transitory interplay, recalled alike in cartoon and ludicrous song.

7) Assembly Church, Capitol Hill

Over the years 1968-76, I learned something of the legislative process while lobbying for the American Folklife Preservation Act. Serving as a volunteer, I found time during Washington residence to "live" in library, museum, and gallery. Returning for research in the Woodrow Wilson Center from Austin, I fell back into Library of Congress/Smithsonian Institution use. Then, several curators alerted me to art that might enhance the JEMF graphics series. Rachel Allen at the National Collection of Fine Arts, suggested a visit to Washington printmaker Prentice Taylor.

On 11 October 1978, I called upon Taylor at home. Unwilling to poach upon the work of art historian or critic, I kept only a few notes. Intending future visits with Taylor, I could not follow through for my trail led away from Washington. Here, I offer belated thanks to Prentice Taylor for sharing thoughts about folksong and art.

Born in 1907, Taylor has lived mainly in "hometown" Washington. He indicated his politics to me in terms of ancestors: liberal, abolitionist, Unitarian. Many white children in the South first heard African-American folk-

song from black servants. Taylor, too, acknowledged such exposure adding a memory from 1922. Carl Sandburg had visited Washington's Central High School for a concert, impressing Prentice with "Frankie and Johnnie" and "Turkey in the Straw." In the late 1920s, when Harlem's Renaissance spilled over into other cities, he heard blues singers in Washington clubs and attended theater performances of African-American skits and plays. During 1931-1932, Taylor collaborated with Langston Hughes by illustrating two fine-press chapbooks.

In the New Deal period, Taylor completed a number of lithographs centered upon folk and genre scenes. With many peers, he treated everyday life—art for and about "the common man." "Assembly Church" (1936) catches the spirit of ecstatic storefront religion, literally at the base of Capitol Hill. The artist had attended such a service near the site of present-day Child's Restaurant. The church's kerosene lamp and pot-bellied stove call attention to the congregation's economic status. Folk enthusiasts will enjoy the array of instruments: piano, guitars, drum, cymbals, triangle.

Taylor's church is long gone; its Union Station neighborhood, "gentrified." Fortunately one artist, impressed by folk-religious themes, has left a print for us to ponder the ambience of sacred music, as well as the difficulty of preserving folk enclaves literally within the shadows of government. In the most personal terms, Taylor's "Assembly Church" recalls for me considerable walking past the Union Station en route to Senate and House Office Buildings. There, I raised questions about folklife's role within a national policy. In this manner, Taylor's print resonates variously as it affects each viewer.

8) Heave Away

Folksong concerts customarily end with either secular or sacred favorites such as "Good Night Irene" or "Amazing Grace." We observe that some church music has been desecularized, while a few ordinary parting numbers have gained extra ritualistic power. These "folk revival" interchanges, involving broad appeal and the rise of a few "transcultural" songs, have occurred as others have been set aside to mark particularity—for example, "Jolie Blonde," often described as the Cajun national anthem. In short, despite the latter's great popularity, it focuses feeling on one cultural group, one patch in *Jacob's American Art*.

Within this closing vignette, I have been tempted to find a picture of emblematic strength, or of comment on an overarching American theme. However, no single structuring principle has dominated this JEMFQ series. Instead, I have moved about from discussing the enlargement of folksong's audience, to buying and selling country

music, shifts in nomenclature for vernacular music, and, of course, to the sheer difficulty in integrating visual and aural expression. Because no single picture can treat all these matters, I turn back in time to 1927 for a simple line drawing accompanying a sea chanty.

Just as no one in my immediate family had ever worked as a cowboy, we knew no seafarers. Nevertheless, in school days I heard chanting performed by glee clubs, and by radio concert singers. I cannot now cite the moment of discovering a relationship between cowboy ballads and maritime songlore. In memory, I credit such linkage to Carl Sandburg's *The American Songbag* (1927). I seem to have known this handsome book forever. Thus, one of its numbers, "Heave Away," brings me to a close.

I select this chanty neither to open matters of rhythmic work songs nor to treat Henry Clay who figures in its text. Rather, I have been intrigued by Sandburg's choice of a Diego Rivera drawing in 1927. *The American Songbag's* prefatory notes (p. xi) identify Rivera with *Mexican Folkways* (a bilingual art and craft magazine first published by Frances Toor in Mexico City, June 1925). Whether Sandburg found this drawing in Toor's magazine, or elsewhere, I do not know. I have long imagined conversations between the poet and the muralist concerning the former's songbook. Did Rivera hear Sandburg perform; did the latter watch the former paint? The questions are endless;

books on both men, numerous. Surely, someone knows the precise circumstance surrounding this tiny line drawing. Did Rivera intend it to be nautical? His "heave" whispers work, but does not shout a specific technique. What impelled Sandburg to this ambiguous choice? Rivera's straining worker tells me that the decades fill themselves with intractable questions and unresolved mysteries. Not all sails are furled; not all halyards secured; not all songs finished; not all pictures decoded.

To circle back to childhood by way of a simple drawing that poses unanswered questions seems a proper way to say goodbye. The last task remains of once more thanking friends who have supplied illustrations for our JEMF series, and have answered countless queries. Professional colleagues across the continent have helped: librarians, archivists, curators, historians, folklorists, photographers, printers, artists, musicians, disc collectors. Special thanks go to Norm Cohen who has encouraged this series from its start in 1967.

Gathering pictures and penning commentaries has been rewarding. I leave to others their own questions, their statements of meaning in musical iconography, their curiosity about American vernacularity.



#1: "Mac's Haywire Orchestra." San Francisco, 1929.

L to R: Cecil 'Rowdy' Wright (guitar); Waite 'Chief' Woodall (fiddle); Frank Gilmore (accordion); Cleo 'Doc' Shahan (guitar); 'Buck' Buckholtz (drums); Asa 'Ace' Wright (fiddle); Jerry Richard (banjo); Frank Baker (piano); Bessie McClintock (vocal); and Harry Kirby 'Haywire Mac' McClintock (banjo, guitar, and vocal). [Courtesy of Henry Young]



#2: "Jam Session," Henry Becker, c. 1937.



#3: "In the Recording Booth," Don Freeman, early 1940s.

Here you see this!

SEPTEMBER • 1938

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That Haunt Me
(Singing with violin and guitars)
Ridin' the Blinds to the Call of the Pines
(Singing with guitars and string bass)

★ Delmore Brothers
B-7741
Brother, Take Warning
Bury Me Under the Weeping Willow
(Singing with guitars)

★ Steve Ledford and the Mountaineers
B-7742
Since I Met My Mother-in-Law
Happy or Lonesome
(Singing with violin, banjo and guitars)

★ Bill Boyd and his Cowboy Ramblers
B-7739
When My Dreams Come True—F.T.
Broadway Mama—F.T.
(With singing)

B-7754 Someone in Heaven Is Thinking of You—Waltz
I've Got Those Oklahoma Blues—F.T.
(With singing)

★ Blue Sky Boys
B-7755
Beautiful, Beautiful Brown Eyes
Story of the Knoxville Girl
(Singing with mandolin and guitar)

★ Jimmie Revard and his Oklahoma Playboys
B-7727
You're as Pretty as a Picture—F.T.
There's a Picture in My Heart—F.T.
(With singing)

★ Hall Brothers
B-7728
The Wrong Road
Your Love Was Not True
(Singing with violin and guitars)

★ Smoky Wood and his Wood Chips
B-7729
Woodchip Blues—F.T.
Wood's Traveling Blues—F.T.
(With singing)

★ Adolph Hofner and his Texans
B-7752
Brown Eyed Sweet—F.T.
Tonight I'm Blue and Lonely—F.T.
(With singing)

★ Wade Mainer and Sons of the Mountaineers
B-7753
Where Romance Calls
Another Alabama Camp Meetin'
(Singing with banjo)

★ Bob Skyles and his Skyrockets
B-7714
Swingin' in Oklahoma—F.T.
My Hill Billy Girl—F.T.
(With singing)

★ Three Tobacco Tags
B-7715
I'm Afraid It's Love
I Was Only Teasing You
(Singing with mandolins and guitars)

★ Ocie Stockard and The Wanderers
B-7717
Just Blues—Slow F.T.
To My House—F.T.
(With singing)

★ Cliff Carlisle
B-7717
Pan-American Man
(Singing and yodeling with violin and guitars)
Riley Puckett
Old Mads' Brown Ferry Blues
(Singing with violin and guitar)

ORGAN

★ Vernon Geyer (Hammond Electric Organ)
B-7738
Whispering—F.T.
(With piano, vibraphone and trumpet)
Honeysuckle Rose—F.T.
(With piano)

Vernon Geyer
B-7713
Sleepy Time Gal—F.T.
(With piano)
Avalon—F.T.
(With piano and vibraphone)

SACRED

★ J. E. Mainer's Mountaineers
B-7730
Just Over in the Glory Land
I'm in the Glory Land Way
(Singing with mandolin and guitar)

VOCAL

★ Gene Austin (Tenor with Orchestra)
B-7751
Ain't She Sweet?
The Dream Girl of Pi K. A.

BAND

★ Bluebird Band
B-7721
Schottische Skip
Varsouviana

RACE

★ Sonny Boy Williamson (Blues Singer)
B-7756
You Give an Account
You've Been Foolin' 'Round Downtown
(With harmonica, guitar and mandolin)

★ Jelly-Roll Morton and his Red Hot Peppers
B-7757
Kansas City Stomps—Stomp
New Orleans Bump—F.T.

★ Tampa Red and The Chicago Five
B-7743
Rock It In Rhythm—F.T.
I Do—F.T.
(Blues singer with orchestra)

★ St. Louis Red Mike
B-7744
Hell Ain't But A Mile and A Quarter
Red Mike Blues
(Blues singer with guitar, piano and string bass)

★ Walter Davis
B-7745
Just Tell Me Your Trouble
Call Me Anytime
(Blues singer with piano and mandolin)

★ Rev. J. M. Gates
B-7758
Death's Black Train is Comin'
Yonder Comes My Lord with a Bible in His Hand
(Sermon with singing)

★ Jazz Gillum and his Jazz Boys
B-7718
I'm That Man Down in the Mine
Good Old 51 Highway
(Blues singer with harmonica, guitar, string bass and washboard)

★ Joe Williams
B-7719
Get Your Head Trimmed Down
Haven't Seen No Whiskey
(Blues singer with mandolin and guitar)

★ Elder Otis Jones
B-7720
When I'm Your Child
O Lord I'm Your Child
So Shall the Coming of Man Be
(Preaching with congregational singing)

★ Yank Rachel (Blues Singer)
B-7731
When You Feel Down and Out
Texas Tommy
(With mandolin, guitar and harmonica)

★ Washboard Sam and his Washboard Band
B-7732
I'm Gonna Keep My Hair Parted—F.T.
Serve It Right—F.T.
(Singing with washboard band)

CAJUN

★ Happy Fats and Raymonde Ramblers
B-2049
Dellade
La Reponse De Blues De Bosco
(String band with singing)

★ J. B. Fuslier and his Merry-makers
B-2050
Two Step Du La Tell
La Valse Du La Compagn
(Fiddle and guitars with singing)

★ Thibodeaux Boys
B-2047
Le Moulin Cassy—F.T.
De Seul Payce—Blues
(Singing with guitars and fiddle)

★ Hackberry Ramblers
B-2048
Mon Cour Me Fais Ci Mal
Faux Pas Tu Bray Cherie
(Singing with fiddle, guitars and string bass)



Drawn by F.O.C. Darley

Sarony & Co. Imp.

H. Huber, Engr.

Tony Washington

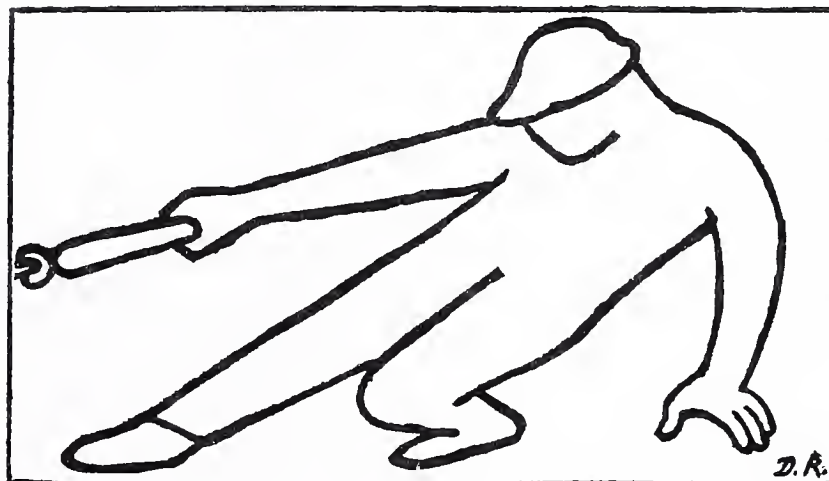
#5: "Tony Washington," Felix Darley, 1856.



#6: "Freda and the Firedogs (Marcia Ball)," Michael Priest, 1974.



#7: "Assembly Church," Prentice Taylor, 1936.



#8: Untitled, Diego Rivera, n.d.

Checklist of Graphics Articles

The following is a list of all articles in Archie Green's "Graphics" series. The series began in issue #6 of what was then the *JEMF Newsletter*, and concludes with "Winding Down" in the present issue of the *JEMF Quarterly*. The first forty-two articles appeared under the collective title "Commercial Music Graphics," the remaining twenty-six as simply "Graphics." Through item #30, the pieces carried no individual titles, and are listed here by topic. Compiling an anthology of selected articles from this series is among Dr. Green's future projects.

Issue No.	Date	Item
6	June 1967	1. O'Keh's First Atlanta Session
7	September	2. Fiddlin' John Carson and Henry Whitter
8	December	3. Columbia's Fiddle, Guitar, and Banjo Records
9	March 1968	4. Victor's <i>Olde Time Fiddlin' Tunes</i>
10	June	5. Uncle Am Stuart on Vocalion
11	September	6. Mac and Bob at Strawplains School
12	December	7. Columbia's Jigs, Reels, and Banjo Music
13	Spring 1969	8. Andrew Jenkins's <i>Christian Love Songs</i>
14	Summer	9. Jimmie Rodgers's "In the Jailhouse Now"
15	Autumn	10. Gennett and Champion Releases
16	Winter	11. Paramount's Southern Series
17	Spring 1970	12. Buell Kazee Folk Song Recital
18	Summer	13. Eck Robertson on Victor in 1923
19	Autumn	14. Two Vocalion Record Sleeves
20	Winter	15. Two Hillbilly Folios
21	Spring 1971	16. Edison Envelope Stuffer
22	Summer	17. J.E. Mainer's Sambo and Liza
23	Autumn	18. Four 78-rpm Album Covers
24	Winter	19. Kentucky Thoroughbreds on Paramount
25	Spring 1972	20. Vocalion Catalog of 1930
26	Summer	21. Victor's Folk Album "P" Series
27	Autumn	22. Victor in Rural Schools
28	Winter	23. Cowboys by Thomas Eakins and Others
29	Spring 1973	24. Folksong on Campus
30	Summer	25. Sacred Recordings
31	Autumn	26. Broadside Art
32	Winter	27. "The New Market Wreck"
33	Spring 1974	28. "Billy the Kid"
34	Summer	29. Gene Autry's Films
35	Autumn	30. The Carter Family

(Items below titled when published; those above untitled)

36	Winter	31. The Archive of American Folk-Song
37	Spring 1975	32. The National Folk Festival Association
38	Summer	33. A Resettlement Administration Song Sheet
39	Autumn	34. Midnight and Other Cowboys
40	Winter	35. Henry Thomas' LP Set
41	Spring 1976	36. Dobie's Cowboy Friends
42	Summer	37. Thomas Hart Benton's Folk Musicians
43	Autumn	38. <i>Chulas Fronteras</i>
44	Winter	39. Peter Tamony's Words

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| 45 | Spring 1977 | 40. Bradley Kincaid's Folios |
| 46 | Summer | 41. Brunswick's Folksong Discs, 1928 |
| 47 | Autumn | 42. Visual Footnotes to <i>Black Culture and Black Consciousness</i> |
| 48 | Winter | 43. Miguel Covarrubias' Jazz and Blues Musicians |
| 49 | Spring 1978 | 44. John Held, Jr.: Jazz Age and Gilded Age |
| 50 | Summer | 45. <i>The Great South</i> |
| 51 | Autumn | 46. John Henry Depicted |
| 52 | Winter | 47. Labor Song as Symbol |
| 53 | Spring 1979 | 48. Fred Becker's John Henry |
| 54 | Summer | 49. Portraits of Appalachian Musicians |
| 55 | Fall | 50. A Suggested Museum Show |
| 56 | Winter | 51. String Bands |
| 57 | Spring 1980 | 52. Kerry Awn's Soap Creek Saloon Calendars |
| 58 | Summer | 53. Folk Music in Folk Art |
| 59 | Fall | 54. Early Country Music Journals |
| 60 | Winter | 55. Palmer Hayden's John Henry Series |
| 61 | Spring 1981 | 56. Clare Leighton |
| 62 | Summer | 57. Old Dan Tucker |
| 63 | Fall | 58. Dan Tucker in <i>Roanoke</i> |
| 64 | Winter | 59. Vernacular Music Albums |
| 65/66 | Spring/Summer 1982 | ----- |
| 67/68 | Fall/Winter | 60. Michael Adams' Honky-Tonk Paintings |
| 69 | Spring 1983 | 61. John Henry Revisited |
| 70 | Summer | 62. The Library of Congress' Cowboy Exhibit |
| 71 | Autumn | 63. General's Folk Albums |
| 72 | Winter | 64. Farewell Tony |
| 73 | Spring/Summer 1984 | 65. Signifying Banjos |
| 74 | Fall/Winter | 66. Bascom Lamar Lunsford's First Album |
| 75/76 | Spring/Summer 1985 | 67. The Visual Arkansas Traveler |
| 77/78 | Fall/Winter | 68. Winding Down |

“Wreck on the Highway”: Rhetoric and Religion in a Country Song¹

Tony Hilfer

A mistaken premise about the texts and artifacts of popular culture is that they are universally simple and banal, lacking the complexity and resonance of high art.² It is self-evident that this is the case for many popular works; if a defense of, say, “Three’s Company” is possible, I leave it to someone else. But I intend to demonstrate a complexity and resonance in a classic country song which can be seen on condition only that it be looked for.

The song is “Wreck on the Highway,” best known as part of Roy Acuff’s repertoire, though composed and originally performed by Dorsey Dixon, a middle-south mill worker. My interest in this text is partly as an illustration of a critical idea—the richness of a popular text—but mostly as an engaging work of art that I want to write about to explain to myself and others why I like it. To put it another way, I did not so much choose this text as it chose me, demanding explication.

My explication will be by way of traditional “close reading” with special emphasis on rhetorical and semiotic analysis since the song has designs on its imputed audience, meaning to persuade that audience to an ideological point of view by constructing a set of oppositions whose sense depends on an inventive interplay of cultural texts.³ The occasion of “Wreck on the Highway” was a highway crash in the winter of 1938 on U.S. Highway 1 near Rockingham, North Carolina, but the meaning of the song is in its interpretation of this actuality in terms of a Christian, Bible-oriented symbol system.

Dorsey Dixon heard about the wreck while working at a cotton mill near the site of the accident. After work he went to the scene and wrote the song that same night.⁴ These are the lyrics, in the well-known version performed by Roy Acuff:

Who did you say it was, brother?
Who was it fell by the way?
When whiskey and blood run together,
Did you hear anyone pray?

Chorus:

I didn’t hear nobody pray, dear brother,
I didn’t hear nobody pray,
I heard the crash on the highway,
But I didn’t hear nobody pray.

When I heard the crash on the highway,
I knew what it was from the start,
I went to the scene of destruction,
And a picture was stamped on my heart.

There was whiskey and blood all together,
Mixed with glass where they lay,
Death lay her hand in destruction,
But I didn’t hear nobody pray.

(repeat chorus)

I wish I could change this sad story,
That I am now telling you,
But there is no way I can change it,
For somebody’s life is now through.

Their soul has been called by the master,
They died in a crash on the way,
And I heard the groans of the dying,
But I didn’t hear nobody pray.

(repeat chorus)⁵

Given the rhetorical question that frames the song, the logical starting point for interpretation is the topic of audience—to whom is the song directed and how do its speakers relate to this audience? In a sense, of course, the audience is whoever hears the song, performed live or on various recordings. Among those who have performed “Wreck on the Highway” are Dorsey Dixon himself in more than one version, Roy Acuff in several recordings, and, surprising to me, Jean Ritchie. A particularly interesting recording, as I shall later show, is Acuff’s collaboration with the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band on the album, *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*.⁶ The audience is not homogeneous, as Dixon, Acuff, and the Dirt Band have the different constituencies of folk, country, and rock—although a given individual might cross over. I shall briefly take up the question of the song’s various audiences toward the end of this essay, but more immediate and more central is the audience implicitly defined within the song itself and the relation of *this* audience to the song’s meaning.

The song begins with the first speaker’s two crucial questions: (1) who fell by the way and (2) did they pray? The rest of the song is the second speaker’s complex answer to these questions, questions that unite the two speakers and the implied audience in a privileged system of symbols. Indeed, it is only through the shared conventions and code of the speakers and implied audience, that the questions are answered, that the argument of the song becomes coherent, that the metaphor of the song is extended. The second question, “did they pray?”, is partially answered, but the answer only has significance within the code. The first question is never *explicitly* answered. Rather, it is answered in terms of the code, along

with the second question: Who were these people? Non-prayers, that's who. (The song is an example of the aesthetics of negativity; what is most important in it is what did not happen.)

The song is framed as the dialogue of two speakers, who are "brothers," that is brothers in the church, in a southern fundamentalist congregation, interested not in the material facts of the event, the journalistic significance (who, what, when, where?) but in the moral and especially eschatological meanings. This is the rhetorical device of the song—its maker's invention to raise an unfortunately commonplace secular event, another highway crash, from journalistic cliché to religious exemplum.

There is a fine logic to this transposition. Car and highway, especially southern highway, have rich mythological associations, associations running directly counter to the ethos of fundamentalist religiosity. The car, as William Faulkner proclaimed, is that to which the American has projected his libido, "our national sex symbol."⁷ It was the charger of that cavalier of lowlife middle-south folklore, the moonshine runner, the demigod of Thunder Road. The car is speed, the fast-track life, vitality, sport, and back-seat sex.⁸

The highway was a route of adventure and danger interspersed with the delicious temptations of the road house, the highway version of the honky-tonk. James Ross's 1940 novel, *They Don't Dance Much*, has its sordid plot of moonshine, murder, and adultery centered on a North Carolina road house.⁹ But Flannery O'Connor's Hazel Motes says the last word on the car as a secular exemplar: "Nobody with a good car needs to be justified."¹⁰ (In fact, the car in *Wise Blood* combines Jonah's ship and whale, being Hazel's failed mode of escape from his religious vocation.)

There are then, several texts in "Wreck on the Highway": a journalistic text; the text of southern car and highway dreams and wishes; and a religious, homiletic text, itself allusive to the authoritative text of its source of good and bad news, the Bible. Dixon's song is the transposition from the journalistic secular code to that of religious homily. What matters is not who was in the wreck—names, addresses, ages, occupations—but the state of the dead—did they die in grace?

First, however, one secular association of the southern highway can be carried directly over to the religious code, that is, its associations with fatality, sudden death. Have not national and local radio and television news, as in the twenties and thirties newspaper news did, picked up on the cultural functions of the death's head on the desk, serving as our contemporary *memento mori* to which we make our quotidian observance: "Give us this day our daily dead"? National news gives us assassinations, wars, and large-scale natural disasters; local news, the latest community body count from murders and wrecks on the highway.

Such news casts a kind of bad spell on us, simultaneously arousing and routinizing our terrors, alienating eschatological significance into statistical rationalization and pornographic violence. The pre-Interstate road between Nashville and Louisville, officially the Dixie Highway, was locally known as "the Dixie Dieway," and citizens of Austin, Texas honor a particularly nasty stretch of highway with stickers reading "Pray for me, I drive Highway 183."

Dorsey Dixon took such material, in its late 1930s form of media pornography and the stuff of appalled and fascinated gossip, and recast it into the providential religious code from which it had originally emerged. He thus dramatically reinvented highway myths as a negative version of the Christian pilgrimage as codified in Matthew 7:13-14:

Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;

and in the many hymns deriving therefrom: "Travelling Onward to the City" ("Treading not the straight and narrow way"); "Savior, Blessed Savior" ("Journeying o'er the road/Worn by saints before us"); "Awake our Souls, Away our Fears" ("True, 'tis a strait and narrow road"); etc. The literal southern highway becomes a route traversed by those who "have forsaken the right way and are gone astray" (II Peter 2:15), and those forgetful of "the way of righteousness" (Matthew 21:32). The highway's anagogical meaning is thus its antithesis to "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) embodied in Christian gospel.

There is, in the seventeenth century sense of the word, a high wit in this transposition, though Dixon's inventiveness may have been helped along by such mountain spirituals as "Life is Like a Mountain Railroad." In this piece, the Union station which is the traveler's goal is located just the other side of the trestle spanning Jordan's swelling tide, and the Christian engineer has the eschatological charge to "make the run successful, from the cradle to the grave." Dixon, however not only updates the "way" but builds his song around the tension between traditional and contemporary versions of it.

The word text of "Wreck on the Highway" is rhetorically inventive throughout, especially in the devices of pathos: *enargia*, *optatio*, *threnos*.¹¹ To be sure, all these words, as well as others I have used—semiotic, anagogical, and so on—would have been unfamiliar to Dorsey Dixon. But he uses these devices, uses them with skill, having learned them from the persuasive rhythms of the Bible and from the oral tradition of fundamentalist sermonizing. Of course, Aristotle's great codification of rhetoric is an anal-

ysis more of spoken than written discourse, and the devices predate their taxonomy. The song's rhetorical argument is framed by the two initiatory questions in a stanza which also introduces the song's most graphic image ("whiskey and blood run together") and its extended metaphor: the wreck victims as those who "fell by the way," that is, fallen sinners. The graphic image carries on into coding the wreck as an exemplum, a picture stamped on the heart revealing doctrinal truth. This is *enargia*, that is, the rhetoric of vivid description with a vengeance.

There is an intimation of another tension in the conjunction of whiskey and blood. For a fundamentalist temperance advocate, a believer in providence—Dorsey Dixon was all of these—whiskey and violent death on the secular level link naturally with sin and unredeemed death on the religious level, a link directly oppositional to the wine/blood of Christian salvation, two opposed chains of transmutation. (A parallel instance to Dixon's play on symbolic ideas derives from personal experience: many years ago while driving a rural highway in Washington state I came upon a large billboard proclaiming "There's more life in Olympia" controverted by a whitewash message on a rock some thirty yards on arguing "The only *true* [double whitewash underlines] Life is in Jesus Christ." Speaking of intertextuality...)

The song throughout is in the rhetorical form of a *threnos*, that is, a form of speech by which the orator laments some person or people for the misery they suffer. It is, in fact, a kind of negative threnody enforced in stanza four by the speaker's *optatio*, that is, a form of speech by which the speaker expresses his desire by wishing to God or Men: "I wish I could change this sad story, That I am now telling you." But providence has foreclosed on their negative vocation: "Their soul has been called by the master." Even the sounds of their death-agony—"I heard the groans of the dying"—gruesomely confirm their choice of the secular, physical life as opposed to the spiritual life expressed in the sound of prayer, a sound emphasized by its absence. The all too apparent groans of the body, then, are antithetical to the unutterable groans of the spirit which St. Paul evokes: "Likewise the Spirit also helped our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Romans 8:26) Perhaps the groans of the victims even preview those of the damned suffering in Hell; this would be a termination fully in keeping with the logic of the song's argument.

Of course, this logic would carry conviction to some audiences more than others, there being two especially appropriate audiences: the "brothers" of a fundamentalist congregation lamenting the fallen, and those backsliders who despite their honky-tonking (or all the more because of it) remain responsive to the religious symbol system of

the song and open to its rhetorical persuasion. For both, the song is a kind of sermon, confirming the former group and warning the latter. (I have heard this song in honky-tonks, though I can't say if anyone was converted.) Indeed the Acuff version leaves out two stanzas of the original Dixon song that develop the theme even more explicitly:

Give out the game and stop drinking
For Jesus is pleading with you
It cost him a lot in redeeming
Redeeming a promise for you.

But it'll be too late if tomorrow
In a crash you should fall by the way
With whiskey and blood all around you
And you can't hear nobody pray.¹²

Here the non-prayers seem to be onlookers rather than the victims, implying the if "you," that is the onlookers and song-audience, fail to recognize the eschatological significance of the wreck by praying for the souls of the dying, this lack of grace will rebound upon you when your time comes. You ought to be in church praying and being prayed for, not boozing at some honky tonk.

Other audiences will receive other messages, much depending on the setting and style of the performance, the relation between performer and audience. These variables present no obstacle to the analysis in intertextuality since performance-as-spectacle is a text. The performer's relation to audience is enunciated by the tone of the performance; this tone text qualifies the significance of the word text.¹³

Thus, when Jean Ritchie, the folk singer, performed "Wreck on the Highway" before a sophisticated, folk-oriented audience, she distanced herself from the material (though its inclusion in her performance was a sort of tribute) by tonally camping it up a bit.¹⁴ She did this not in the usual fashion of exaggerating and overdoing the emotion but by the opposite method of speeding up the tempo and singing in an efficient, flat tone so that the song comes out sounding rather brisk and informational. In this version the song becomes not an emotional message from the fundamentalist South but a dry comment about its dryness.

However, Roy Acuff, the performer most identified with "Wreck on the Highway," is famous for emphasizing the song's piety and pathos by his literally weepy tonal and visual performance of it. (He cries on stage.) The foregrounded emotionality comes through on Acuff's most culturally interesting performance of the song, that on the extraordinary three disc album, *Will The Circle Be Unbroken*, which was described by the *Nashville Tennessean* as "one of the most important recordings done in the forty-five years of the Nashville music business."¹⁵ The *Tennessean* reporter read the performance text of the album as a bridging of various socio-political gaps—

youth/age, contemporary/traditional, liberal/conservative—as embodied in the opposition of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band to various traditionalist country musicians involved in the project: Roy Acuff, Mother Maybelle Carter, and so on.

The suspense of the occasion was whether such an odd cultural conjunction could work, whether the fragmented American consensus of 1971 could be symbolically reaffirmed: "The night before their meeting with Acuff, the members of the Dirt Band seemed as uneasy about uniting with Acuff's conservative traditional mores as he was about joining their hairy liberality." "The point," as the *Tennessean* reporter punned it, "is the way in which the bridge was gulfed with music."

In the recording of "Wreck on the Highway" Roy Acuff is, of course, the lead singer. He is backed by two Dirt Band performers and by four traditional country musicians: Beecher (Bashful Brother Oswald) Kirby of Acuff's own Smoky Mountain Boys, Earl Scruggs, Vassar Clements, and Junior Huskey. (Though Earl Scruggs, influenced by his son, Randy, had already somewhat compromised Nashville traditionalism by playing at peace rallies.) The quality of performance indicated some sort of meeting of the minds, or at the least, talents; no negligible achievement in 1971. The occasion was, so to say, culturally intertextual.

But to the interpretive community of the academic world, such performances are automatically classified as low culture, and this community hates anything low. Unfortunately, they hate it without understanding it in the least. If the basic gist of this song were recast to some pre-automotive form of accident, rewritten in Middle English and claimed as a new manuscript discovery from the fourteenth century, it would be read as the brilliantly inventive play on biblical texts and Christian meanings that it is. But this and other classical works of popular culture are deemed simple because they are read simply-mindedly.¹⁶ To cite another biblical text, "Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not?" I hope this essay shows what can be heard and seen in Dorsey Dixon's song.

Notes

1. This essay is for Archie Green. (A.H. 1988)
2. See, for instance, Abraham Kaplan, "The Aesthetics of the Popular Arts" in Irving Deer and Harriet A. Deer, eds., *The Popular Arts* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), 315-342, for a superior version of this argument.
3. The song is marvellously exemplary of "intertextuality," "the relation of a particular text to other texts." As Julia Kristeva, who I am quoting, argues, "every text takes shape as a mosaic of citations, every text is the absorption and transformation of other texts." Kristeva enjoins the study of the text "as intertextuality considers it...within (the text of) society and history." *Desire in Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 37.
4. The details about the crash on U.S. 1 come from Archie Green's album notes to the Nancy Dixon, Howard Dixon, Dorsey Dixon record, *Babies in the Mill*, Testament Records T3301 (now out of print). For an account of Dorsey Dixon see Archie Green, "Dorsey Dixon: Minstrel of the Mills," *Sing Out* 16:3 (July, 1966), 10-13.
5. "Wreck on the Highway." Written by Dorsey Dixon, copyright 1946, renewed 1974, Acuff-Rose Music, Inc. All rights reserved, used by permission.
6. United Artists Records, UAS 9801.
7. William Faulkner, *Intruder in the Dust* (New York: New American Library, 1949), 182.
8. See David L. Lewis, "Sex and the Automobile: From Rumble Seats to Rocking Van" in David L. Lewis and Lawrence Goldstein, eds., *The Automobile in American Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 123-133. Lewis demonstrates the association of automobiles with sex from the teens to the present.
9. (New York: Popular Library, 1976). Originally published, 1940.
10. Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood* in *Three by Flannery O'Connor* (New York: New American Library, 1964), 64.
11. For definitions of these rhetorical terms see Sister Miriam Joseph, *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 340.
12. See Dorsey Dixon, *I Didn't Hear Anybody Pray*, Bluebird 7449. (Recorded 1938 in Charlotte, North Carolina).
13. For the distinction of texts within a given singing performance see Nicholas R. Spitzer, "'Got the World In a Jug': Reputation and Respectability in the Classic Blues," *Folklore Annual of the University Folklore Association*, Nos. 7 and 8, University of Texas, Austin, 1977, 54-77. Spitzer distinguishes between word text, tone text, and visual text.
14. See (or rather hear) Jean Ritchie, *Precious Memories*, Folkways Records FA 2427, recorded ca. 1962 in New York City.
15. The *Nashville Tennessean*, Sunday Morning, August 14, 1971. Reproduced on sleeve jacket in *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*, UAS 9801.
16. See Anthony Channel Hilfer, "Inversion and Excess: Texts of Bliss in Popular Culture," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 22:2 (Summer 1980), 125-137.

Dr. Smith's Champion Horse-Hair Pullers: An Ozark String Band

W.K. McNeil

Most writers dealing with the history of early country music have overemphasized Appalachian musicians and underemphasized those from the Ozarks.¹ Perhaps this is understandable since most recordings during the years from 1923-1932 were by Appalachian-based performers. Also, to some extent, the emphasis is justified for few Ozark musicians produced any "national hits." Among the first was Arkansas's Elton Britt, but his recording fame came after 1932.² Finally, few Ozark groups were long-lived; most of them participated in single recording sessions and then disappeared as recording artists. For example, Pope's Arkansas Mountaineers, one of the most popular Ozark string bands recorded during the 1920s, had only one session in 1928 even though their records sold fairly well throughout the South.³ Certainly no Ozark group compared in longevity with north Georgia's Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers, who in various forms survived for a decade and a half. Perhaps the longest lived Ozark string band which recorded during the 1920s, and one of the largest mountain groups ever recorded, was Dr. Smith's Champion Horse-Hair Pullers, a group based in the tiny Arkansas mountain town of Calico Rock.

The moving force behind the Horse-Hair Pullers was Dr. Henry Harlin Smith, one of Izard County's leading citizens and a tireless supporter of Ozark culture. He was born 16 May 1881, three miles from Calico Rock in the small community of Spring Creek. His parents, David Hume and Mariah Jane Benbrook Smith, were popular and well-read local citizens.⁴ David Smith followed the latest farming practices and his home was a much discussed showplace that was once featured in the Missouri Pacific Railroad's magazine as a "Modern Ozark Farm." Mariah Smith very proudly claimed to be a direct descendant of John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Although several members of the family were interested in music, apparently none of them ever learned to play any instruments.⁵ Harlin, however, did enjoy singing in church and, according to those who knew him well, had a pleasant, if untrained, voice.⁶

After attending neighborhood schools, Smith enrolled in Barren Forks College in preparation for medical training. For several months he "read" under his friend and mentor, Dr. Jim Roe, prior to enrolling in the University of Arkansas Medical Department, as it was then known. Upon his graduation in 1906 he returned to Calico Rock where he formed a partnership with his old friend, Jim Roe. At the same time he was appointed local surgeon for

the Missouri Pacific Railroad, a post he held until his death in 1931. Always eager to learn the newest concepts and techniques of medicine, Dr. Smith returned to do post-graduate work in medicine on at least five occasions after 1906.

Smith was more than just a good doctor, he was one of the most popular local citizens, a good community organizer, and a person who took great interest in his hometown and the welfare of its residents. He was also a public relations man *par excellence*, a fact attested to by his ability to persuade the organizers of the county fair to have it in Calico Rock rather than in the county seat, Melbourne, which was the usual fair site. In the mid-1920s he built a small cafe where he showed motion pictures six nights a week. This venture Smith no doubt viewed as a money making effort but he also was interested in the cafe-movie theater as a place where the young people of Calico Rock could go for good, inexpensive entertainment.

Good community man that he was, Dr. Smith was not a stern sour-faced prude but a jovial person who liked to have a good time. He was also fond of playing practical jokes. Smith and a lawyer friend of his were well-known in the community for playing pranks on each other. On one occasion during the prohibition era the two were taking a train ride together and Smith put a bottle of liquor in his friend's suitcase. The good doctor then notified the conductor that he suspected his companion might be harboring some booze. After a search the illegal drink was found and the lawyer was able to remain on the train only after some lengthy talking.⁷

Like many other residents of Izard County, Smith resented the image of backwardness that a large number of Americans held of the White River area and he was determined to do something about breaking the stereotype. Moreover, he was proud of the region's natural beauties and resources and felt they did not receive adequate promotion. Aware of the wealth of musical talent that existed in the immediate vicinity, Smith felt that the best means of accomplishing both goals was through giving local musicians greater prominence. With this in mind he organized a fiddle contest that was held in Calico Rock in January 1926. From the winners of this contest he formed the "Horse-Hair Pullers" and he soon assembled a group of vocalists that he dubbed the "Hill-Billy Quartet." The next step was to arrange for them to play for a wide audience. Dr. Smith began plans to get the group on KTHS, Hot Springs, Arkansas, then two years old and one

of the most powerful stations in Arkansas. Smith realized, however, that it would cost a great deal to get such a large group to the radio station so he arranged for three nights of performance at a theater in Hot Springs to offset the travel expenses.

The initial radio broadcast took place on 13 March 1926 and Smith, never one to leave matters to chance, made sure that the event received widespread coverage by inviting columnists for various papers to be guests at the performances. One man, George Moreland, came from Memphis and later wrote a glowing account of his impression of the "Calico Rock Bunch" for the *Commercial Appeal*. The group Moreland heard included Bryan Lackey, Owen Hunt, Luther Walker, George Dillard, and W.P. McCleary on fiddle and guitar and J. Odie Goatcher, Homer T. Goatcher, Roosevelt Garner, and Hubert Simmons as the Hill-Billy Quartet. Moreland was not the only person who enjoyed the program; while the group was on the air a total of 225 telegrams from several states arrived at the station applauding the presentation. Dr. Smith could not have hoped for greater success.

Not all of the publicity the Horse-Hair Pullers received was expected. One impromptu incident that the participants remembered the rest of their lives brought them a great deal of newspaper and radio attention in several states. The *Arkansas Gazette*, 16 March 1926 reported:

"HILLBILLY" QUARTET IS
TRIED BY MOCK COURT

When members of the "Hillbilly" quartette and the "Hoss-Hair Pullers" of Calico Rock and their party returned home last night, they had an interesting tale to tell. All 12 members of the party were arrested yesterday morning by Motorcycle Patrolman Haynie as suspects, and were given a hearing before Judge J.A. Weas that lasted two hours. After thoroughly convincing himself that the boys were not law-breakers Judge Weas and the spectators treated the party to dinner and sent them on their way rejoicing.

It all came about when Ray Perryman's car was struck by another car and the fender dented. Patrolman Haynie immediately swooped down on Perryman and took him to police headquarters, where, by chance, the Judge Weas and Chief of Police Clark heard the story of the accident.

Upon learning that the quartet had broadcast from station KTHS at Hot Springs Saturday night, Judge Weas sought first hand information as to the quartet's ability to sing. The singing drew such an audience that adjournment was taken from Chief Clark's office to the court room where a mock trial was held.

Earl Wiseman, a member of the party and an attorney of Calico Rock, appealed to W.T. Pate, Jr., in an effort to have the party released. When Mr. Pate reached Little Rock he found that he was "stuck" for a box of cigars. He entered into the spirit of the joke and helped to "convict" members of the party for their actions.

The visitors claimed to be musicians and to substantiate the claim, sang 'I Want to Get Along Down the Line.' It was very appropriate and after several spectators had been fined to help pay for the dinner, they sang 'It Hurts, Oh, How It Hurts.'

Selections were played by the fiddlers, W.P. McCleary, Owen Hunt, and Bryan Lackey, which helped in bringing an acquittal. Further songs by the quartet ended the 'show.' As the party started on its way again, the quartet sang "It's Not So Bad After All."⁸

During the week after the Horse-Hair Pullers appeared on KTHS the station received several telegrams and phone calls asking for the band's return. Still, it was over a month before the group made its second appearance in Hot Springs. This time, 27 April 1926, Smith's aggregation was billed as the Horse-Hair Pullers, the Hill-Billy Duet, and Hill-Billy Quartet. Smith waxed romantic in his introductory address given over the air prior to his band's second radio performance:

It is indeed gratifying to know our program has made so many minds and hearts drift back to the earlier days when all was well, when the 'hoss-hair pullers' of old were in due form and that all parties concerned were in a receptive mood for tipping of the fantastic toe. Those days are gone, yet the memory lurks with us still. We take this opportunity to boost the White River country and the Missouri Pacific Company. My aggregation from this district claim that their music and songs are not suggestive of anything except good and wholesome exercise.

He concluded in a boastful manner:

So everybody come to the Arkansas Ozarks, where you can eat the best fruit in the world; where home-cured meat is found in the smokehouse, and corn and hay in the barn; where you can juice your own cow, feed your own chickens, fish in the wonderful White River, meet these men of the Missouri Pacific and natives, and you will then say, 'Yes, indeed, you have the most wonderful country in the world.'⁹

Smith returned with his group for one final appearance on KTHS, on 20 December 1926. While these radio performances were successful, the distance between Calico Rock and Hot Springs made for a very tiring trip on the primitive roads of the 1920s. Moreover, having achieved a certain degree of fame, the group was able to stay busy closer to home. Most weekends found them performing at some theater in Izard or nearby counties and, occasionally, for Missouri Pacific Railroad functions. They also played their music for high school chapel programs, sometimes going as far as Little Rock. While band members usually made a little money from their appearances, they mainly considered the venture a lark rather than a means of making a living. Always fun loving and gregarious, Dr. Smith made sure the band members

enjoyed themselves. Although not a drinking man himself, he kept booze on hand for those who liked to take a nip. On one occasion this created a slight problem. One of the vocalists was a pretty heavy imbibor and on a trip to Hot Springs indulged too much and passed out. Unfortunately, he was also scheduled to drive one of the cars, a duty which fell to another member who had never driven. Fortunately, the novice was successful and the group safely made its way home.¹⁰

On 12 September 1928 Smith's band recorded six sides for Victor in Memphis. According to some of the band members the group was told to play anything they wanted as long as it was not under copyright.¹¹ Undoubtedly the record company wanted to avoid as many royalty payments as possible. Nevertheless, at least one, and possibly three, of their songs were still under copyright protection. The six selections ranged from religious songs to "coon songs" to folksongs. Smith (or possibly record company executives) followed a practice standard among early rural recording groups in copyrighting the songs under the names of various band members. In any case, there is nothing unusual about the nineteenth century ballad "In the Garden Where the Irish Potatoes Grow" being assigned to fiddler Charlie Duncan.

It is tempting to say that the Horse-Hair Pullers made records that were best sellers, but there is no basis for such an assertion. Sales figures for most of their releases are apparently no longer available, and those sides for which such data are accessible show that they sold very poorly. The second 78 rpm record (Victor-40059: "Up in Glory"/"Save My Mother's Picture From the Sale") was issued on 3 May 1929 and sold 4,530 copies. The third coupling (V-40124: "Just Give Me the Leavings"/"Nigger Baby") was released on 4 October 1929 and sold only 3,429 copies. Even by the record sales standards of depression-ridden 1929 these are very low figures. Although record sales began to fall off early in 1929 most releases of that era still managed to sell six or seven thousand copies, some as many as twenty thousand, and an occasional one over fifty thousand. For example, the Carter Family's "Foggy Mountain Top," which was also released on 3 May, sold ninety-three thousand copies, making it by far the most successful Victor country release of that year.¹² According to surviving band members and some other local residents, the 78s did a steady business in Calico Rock, but it seems clear that sales outside the Arkansas Ozarks were virtually nil.¹³

Although their recording experience was the group's high point, Smith's band stayed together for another two years. Perhaps "together" is too strong a word, for the personnel shifted at almost every performance. At no time did the Horse-Hair Pullers and Hill-Billy Quartet have more than eight members, but a total of thirteen men belonged to the organization over the years of its existence.

One reason for the changing membership was Dr. Smith's penchant for sponsoring instrumental contests and adding the winners to his group. On one occasion he held a French Harp contest, the winner becoming a member of his band for a couple of performances.¹⁴ Typically, Smith ballyhooed these contests with a newspaper ad. For example, the 4 April 1930 issue of the *Calico Rock Progress* contained the following notice:

Boys, get your old jugs out and tune 'em up, for Dr. Smith contemplates staging a jug blowing contest at an early date. He desires to add a real jug blower to his Hoss-Hair Pullers. Now is your chance to juggle the jug and expand your lungs. Get jugs of different sizes and tune 'em to chord same as that of band instruments. It can be done.¹⁵

In 1930, after four years the Horse-Hair Pullers and Hill-Billy Quartet broke up, to some extent a victim of their success. The band's fame had grown and they were being called on more often to provide entertainment throughout northern Arkansas. What had begun, at least for the musicians, as just an enjoyable pastime was now becoming almost a fulltime job, thereby losing much of its appeal. Those men with families saw that soon they would have to make a choice between home life and entertaining, and opted for the former.¹⁶ Then, Smith, as a doctor, simply did not have the time to devote to the group that it obviously was going to require. So, shortly after the onset of the Great Depression, Calico Rock's most famous musical group came to an end.¹⁷

Dr. Smith outlasted his band by only a short time. On 14 October 1931, while driving to Little Rock, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. He was taken to a hospital but he never regained consciousness.¹⁸ Thus, at the age of fifty, the life of one of Izard County's leading citizens ended. Nearly a thousand people attended the funeral which was held in the spacious Spring Creek Methodist Church, certainly a large turnout anywhere but especially in a town which then had a population of less than eight hundred.¹⁹ That crowd is not the only indication of the esteem in which Dr. Smith was held. Today, more than a half century after his death, he is still fondly remembered by residents of Calico Rock, and that is perhaps the best possible testimony to the character of this remarkable citizen of north Arkansas.

Of the various personnel associated with Dr. Smith's band only Roosevelt Garner, Hubert Simmons, Owen Hunt, and Graydon Bone are still living. Homer T. Goatcher is said to have died shortly after the group broke up and his brother, J. Odie Goatcher, is reported to have died somewhere in the vicinity of Mt. Home, Arkansas. According to various sources Ray Marshall, W.P. McCleary, Luther Walker, and George Dillard are all dead.²⁰

Reconstructing the biography of a band that broke up

over fifty years ago is difficult, but is nothing compared to the task of trying to reconstruct their repertoire. Ordinarily one might rely on their recorded work, but since Smith's group made only six sides during their four years, their records obviously do not contain a sizable percentage of their repertoire. Of their six cuts there is one ballad that can be traced back to the nineteenth century, one traditional song made up mainly from "floating verses," one religious song, two "coon songs," and a sentimental number. This selection can probably be considered representative of the breadth of the band's repertoire, especially since some former members have said that is the case, but this judgment may not be precisely accurate.²¹ For example, several persons interviewed during the past decade recall that Smith's group featured a large number of comedy and gospel songs in their stage presentations. The former are represented on the 1928 recordings but the gospel items are not.²²

Perhaps the most interesting of the six sides is "In the Garden Where the Irish Potatoes Grow," a traditional ballad also known in the Arkansas Ozarks as "The Beebe Blossom."²³ Thought to date back to the mid-nineteenth century, this song is more common in oral tradition than its appearance in folk song collections indicates. Apparently Carl Sandburg is the only folksong collector to publish it and he gives only two verses. It appears in his *The American Songbag* under the title "I Met Her in the Garden Where the Praties Grow." Sandburg tells nothing about the history of the song, and reveals very little about his sources, but he does note that a C.W. Loutzenhiser, a retired Chicago railroad worker, recalled singing the number with an Irish girl when, as a boy, he traveled with his father's circus.²⁴ As Sandburg's collection was published in 1927, this dates the song back at least to the 1870s.

The exact source of Smith's version is unknown, but it was contributed by Leeman Bone who found it in an old songbook. Whether this was a published volume or merely a handwritten book is uncertain; in any case it is the longest version of the song yet reported. Most texts end with the couple being happily married and raising a family, whereas the version by the Horse-Hair Pullers and Hill-Billy Quartet discusses their breakup, concluding with the lines:

Now she's gone and left me,
She's enjoying her new life.
If she can get a husband
I can get a wife.²⁵

There is always the possibility that these lines and the ones immediately preceding it which detail the couple's breakup are not part of the original song but were added by Leeman Bone, who was noted as a songwriter, although most of his output was of religious material.

Of the other five songs recorded by Smith's band, few can be traced to specific authors. One that can be so traced is the religious number, "Up in Glory," the only one of their six sides that was definitely under copyright protection in 1928. This is also the most unusual of the recordings by the Horse-Hair Pullers; the hymn's mournful tune contrasts sharply with their other selections. The number is the work of one of the most prolific gospel song writers of the twentieth century, James Rowe. A native of Devonshire, England, where he was born on New Year's Day, 1865, Rowe came to the United States in 1890, settling in Albany, New York. During his career he wrote over nineteen thousand gospel song texts, of which the best known are "I Walk With the King," "I Would Be Like Jesus," and "Love Lifted Me." He spent his later life in Wells, Vermont, where he supported himself mainly by writing greeting card verse. Rowe died in his Vermont home, 10 November 1933.²⁶

"Going Down the River" is credited to Odie Goatcher, which may mean that he contributed the item to the group, or may indicate nothing more than that Smith selected him arbitrarily to receive title credit.²⁷ It is obvious from the record that Goatcher and Roosevelt Garner, listed in the *Victor Master Book* as basses, are the leads for this song.²⁸ Certainly, Goatcher did not write the piece for it is a widely known folksong, versions of which were recorded by Al Hopkins and His Buckle Busters and the Weems String Band.²⁹ Smith's version does vary somewhat from most others, namely in the third and fourth verses. Most texts have it:

Oh, my little girl, if you don't do better
Put you on the boat, gonna send you down the river.
Boat began to sink, my heart began to quiver
Oh, my little girl, you're going down the river.

Smith's text, however, has,

Oh, my little girl, if you don't do me better
I'm gonna get me a boat and I'll cruise down the river.
Boat began to rock and I began to quiver.
Oh, my little girl, I'm going down the river.³⁰

The most commonly used "floating verse" in Smith's version is the final one:

Coon Creek's wide and Coon Creek's muddy,
And I'm so drunk I can't stand steady.

This is most often associated with "Cripple Creek," perhaps the most popular banjo tune ever performed.

About the other three numbers recorded by the Horse-Hair Pullers very little definite information can be provided at present. "Save My Mother's Picture From the Sale" was another number which Leeman Bone located in an old songbook and contributed to the band. This partic-

ular piece has an interesting and somewhat confusing history. Apparently, the original title was "Save My Father's Picture From the Sale!" for that is how it is on the earliest publications. It was issued in 1889 with lyrics attributed to C. W. Brown and music to J. Walsh. Another sheet music edition, which, unfortunately, is undated, credits the words to Walter Burnot and the music to Sam Redfern. A related item is the 1886 song "Don't Sell My Mother's Picture," copyrighted by George M. Vickers. A parody titled "Save My Brother's Whiskers from the Pail" appeared in *Hyde's Star Specialty Company Away Down South Songster* (1890) and the original song has been reported from a traditional singer by at least one folklorist.³¹ The title, however, is changed to "Save My Mother's Picture From the Sale!" on the only two commercial recordings, Dr. Smith's and Uncle Dave Macon's.³² Norm Cohen suggests that the song may predate the 1880s although no evidence of that, beyond a remark by one of Vance Randolph's informants, supports an earlier date.³³

"Give Me the Leavin's" and "Nigger Baby" both originated during the "coon song" era (1896-1916) and have the indelible stamp of that unfortunate period when a black skin was thought to be inherently funny and black males were stereotyped in an excessively negative way.³⁴ "Give Me the Leavin's," written in 1904 by James Weldon Johnson, presents the watermelon-loving, happy-go-lucky black, while "Nigger Baby" gives a more vicious, razor-toting image of black men, implying that they relish being regarded as "cutters." These are songs of a type that will probably never be publicly popular again. Obviously, though, a generation that chuckled over the routines of the Two Black Crows and the like regarded such items in a different light; these songs were intended as comedy and sold as such.

So much for the recorded repertoire. What other songs did the Horse-Hair Pullers perform on stage? Here there are only a few clues although, at least, there is considerable certainty about the type of songs. All available evidence indicates that Smith's group generally included a large number of religious and comic songs in their programs as well as the expected fiddle tunes. When it comes to naming individual selections, though, few informants can furnish even one title. Graydon Bone recalls that one of the songs the Quartet sang on a number of occasions during his tenure with the band was "Jacob's Ladder." Unfortunately, that is the only religious song title, other than the one they recorded, that anyone now remembers being performed by the group. Bryan Lackey remembered that Smith especially liked a fiddle tune he called "Flat Bed Charlie," a traditional item more commonly known as "Oklahoma Charlie" or "White River Charlie." The only other tune he recalled Smith's band performing was "Wednesday Night Waltz," one of the top country instrumentals of the 1920s.³⁵

As might be expected, after more than fifty years not much of the repertoire of the Horse-Hair Pullers can be reconstructed. Including the six recorded sides, only nine tunes can be definitely associated with them. Yet this small total is sufficient to verify the testimony of various informants about the nature of the band's programs. There is little doubt that the material the band performed was tightly controlled by Smith. The usual procedure prior to leaving for a performance was for the band to run through every number they intended to play and Smith would then decide whether the selections were appropriate for the audience or if they should be replaced by other items. This great sensitivity to those listening to the music is perhaps one reason why the programs put on by the Horse-Hair Pullers are still fondly recalled over half a century after the group passed out of existence.

Although Dr. Smith's band was only one of many Ozark country groups active during the 1920s and, among those who made commercial records, one of the least successful, its career reveals much about Ozark rural music of the pre-depression era. In some respects the Horse-Hair Pullers and Hill-Billy Quartet are unique in the history of country music. Few string bands even came close to approaching their size, the usual unit consisting of three to five members. Smith's group was, in effect, really two organizations, one a number of strong instrumentalists, and the other composed of several equally strong singers. That the band stayed together in relatively stable form for four years also makes it rather unusual among those Ozark bands that made it into the recording studio.

In most respects, though, the Horse-Hair Pullers and Hill-Billy Quartet are typical of Ozark country musicians of that era. They were united mainly by their love of music and, in this case, their high regard for their leader, Dr. Smith. They never had any interest in making a full time living from playing and singing. Music for them was just a means of having a good time and picking up a few extra bucks. At no point was the band regarded as a profit making venture, not even by Smith. He thought of it mainly as a different sort of public relations association promoting Izard County and Calico Rock. There is, of course, little doubt of his love for the music, without which he would not have considered forming the band; too great an emphasis on the crass, commercial aspects of Smith's guidance would be a distortion of his motives. Indeed, one of the major factors leading to the band's disintegration was that it was becoming increasingly more like a full time occupation than a leisure time pursuit. In other words, once the music stopped being fun and started being work several members felt it was time to quit.

While the Horse-Hair Pullers and Hill-Billy Quartet were more stable than most Ozark groups they were still typical in having a rather fluid membership. It is tempting to think of the bands recorded during the early years of

country music as consisting of essentially the same personnel throughout their careers, a picture that is simply inaccurate. The membership of some Ozark bands differed almost every time they performed, a situation that certainly was not confined to the Ozarks but was true of other areas as well. Smith's group was not that extreme but, nevertheless, their makeup frequently changed, another indication that the vocalists and instrumentalists considered their music basically a leisure time activity. This is vastly different from the attitude of most country bands of the 1980s which, although occasionally changing members, are much more stable than even a fairly long-lived band of the 1920s like Dr. Smith's. The difference is largely one of attitude—the modern groups regard music as a business where as those of Smith's era viewed it as a hobby.

As noted at the beginning of this paper, record companies devoted little time to Ozark groups, probably for a variety of reasons. One is that they were located farther away from the major recording companies than were their counterparts in Appalachia. Then, too, Ozark 78s sold in smaller quantities than those from other sections of the country, a situation that can partially be attributed to their smaller potential audience. In the 1920s country records were designed primarily for sale in the area where the artist was located; the Ozarks, being far less populous than Appalachia, simply had fewer potential record buyers. The smaller population also meant that likely there were fewer artists to be recorded. But, if the record companies were not greatly interested in Ozark country musicians the feeling was, to some extent, reciprocal. Most bands, Smith's included, had relatively little interest in making records, and when they did they thought of the session mainly as a lark rather than a means to either fame or fortune. The attitude of Bryan Lackey, who preferred radio work to the recording session, is common.

Some might find the Horse-Hair Pullers' status as a band led by a non-playing member unique but, actually, this was a phenomenon relatively common both in the Ozarks and in Arkansas. A fairly large number of such groups made records, the best known of these being Pope's Arkansas Mountaineers from Searcy (the person behind this group also headed Reaves White County Ramblers although his name didn't appear in their title). Minton's Ozark String Band (technically not from the Ozarks but, rather, from the Ouachitas) is another example, and many other like groups could be listed. Bands led by non-playing members were, of course not unique either to the Ozarks or to country music of the 1920s. Otto Gray's Oklahoma Cowboys was essentially such a unit, as were such aggregations as the Jean Goldkette Orchestra, the Lester Lanin Orchestra, and Guy Lombardo's Royal Canadians. This type of leadership in the Ozark bands existed only among groups that had recording sessions, a fact that suggests some sort

of business arrangement was involved. But, as this account of Smith's band reveals, even these recording groups, which were undoubtedly the most structured bands, were very informal working associations.

Because so little work has been done on Ozark country music of the pre-World War II era it is premature to arrive at final conclusions on the subject. Based on the research currently available, the career of Dr. Smith's band seemingly provides a microcosm of the state of commercial country music in the Ozarks during the 1920s. Since the 1920s the Ozark region has contributed many famous artists to the field of country music—Porter Wagoner and Jan Howard are just two modern examples. These more recent performers have achieved a success never even envisioned by the beloved doctor from Calico Rock, Arkansas, and his band members. While the Wagoners, Howards, and the Horse-Hair Pullers would all be categorized as country musicians, this brief account of Smith's band indicates that the music produced by the group from Calico Rock and that fashioned by 1980s country singers is separated by more than just an interval of a half century.

Notes

1. The vast majority of the writings in such journals as *Old Time Music* and *Journal of Country Music* concerning old-time music are Appalachian oriented. Exceptions to this general rule are found in Bill Malone's *Country Music U.S.A.: A Fifty-Year History* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1968) and Bill C. Malone and Judith McCulloh, eds., *Stars of Country Music: Uncle Dave Macon to Johnny Rodriguez* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1975). The latter volume even includes a section on "Early Pioneers" but, even in these two instances, the bulk of the publications are given over to Appalachian artists.

2. Elton Britt was performing by 1930 as part of the Beverly Hillbillies but his recording fame came later, primarily in the 1940s when he recorded his most popular song, "There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere."

3. According to Lee Finis Cameron "Tip" McKinney, lead singer for this group, the band would have been able to make more recordings but they demanded more money from their sponsor, J.D. Pope. As a result Pope dropped them and proceeded to form another band, Reaves White County Ramblers.

4. Information on Dr. Smith's early life comes from interviews with several long time residents of Calico Rock and from Frances Hook Jernigan's article, "Dr. Henry Harlin Smith 1881-1931" in *The Izard County Historian* 5:2 (April, 1974), 2-9.

5. This is the consensus of former band members and several community members and relatives.

6. Interview with Euna Ferrill, Dr. Smith's niece, 12 July 1978. Others have also told me this.

7. Interview with Reed Perryman; Calico Rock, Arkansas, 19 July 1978.

8. *Arkansas Gazette*, 16 March 1926. Also reprinted in Helen C. Lindley, "The Hoss-Hair Pullers and Hill-Billy Quartet," *The Izard County Historian* 5:2 (April, 1974), 10-11.

9. Lindley, 11-12.
10. Interview with Graydon Bone, Oxford, Arkansas, 8 April 1980.
11. Interview with Bryan Lackey, Fittstown, Oklahoma, 4 June 1977. Owen Hunt and others have also told me the same thing.
12. I am grateful to Charles Wolfe for these sales figures. They are contained in a letter to me dated 6 April 1982.
13. None of the surviving band members has a copy of any of the six sides cut by the group. I have been told by several local residents, including Audrey Brooks, Reed Perryman, and Euna Ferrill, that the records sold fairly well in Calico Rock.
14. Lackey interview. Also in Lindley, 12.
15. Lindley, 12. Back issues of the Calico Rock *Progress* are no longer available because they were destroyed in a fire.
16. Lackey interview.
17. There were several other quartets in Calico Rock and even a few string bands, but none gained radio or record exposure. It is only fair to mention that one member of the Smith band thought it an inferior group to a later quartet with which he performed.
18. I have been told two different versions of Smith's death but the one given here is probably correct. The second account holds that Smith was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage while attending a basketball game at Melbourne, Arkansas (a town about thirty-five miles from Calico Rock). Dr. Smith was very fond of sports, particularly basketball and baseball, but since most of those who knew him intimately support a different version I have gone along with their choice.
19. I have been unable to find newspaper accounts verifying the figure of approximately a thousand in attendance at Smith's funeral. Several local residents have assured me that this is an accurate figure. In her article Frances Jernigan says "It was estimated by the press that over a thousand friends attended" (8). She doesn't go on to say what newspapers estimated this figure but presumably it was the local paper. Since all Calico Rock papers of the era were destroyed several years ago in a fire it is impossible to verify this matter.
20. This is what I was told by Roosevelt Garner, Hubert Simmons, Audrey Brooks, Reed Perryman, Graydon Bone, and others.
21. This is the information I have from Bryan Lackey, Graydon Bone, Owen Hunt, and others.
22. Both Audrey Brooks, in an interview of 12 February 1977 at her home in Calico Rock, and Euna Ferrill recalled that Dr. Smith was especially fond of gospel material. According to Ferrill one of his great delights was to sing religious songs in church and, although he was quite enthusiastic about his vocalizing, she adds that he wasn't very good as a singer. Reed Perryman and some other local residents recalled that Dr. Smith also liked to do comic pieces.
23. "The Beebe Blossom" was the title Sam Hess (1880-1977) used for this piece. Hess lived three miles from Mt. View, Arkansas, or about thirty miles from Calico Rock. I have also collected texts from other Arkansas Ozark singers who used this title.
24. Carl Sandburg, *The American Songbag* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1927), 463.
25. This was issued as Victor 21711.
26. For information about Rowe see William J. Reynolds, *Companion to Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1976),

415, and the same author's *Hymns of Our Faith: A Handbook for the Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1964), 395-396.

27. This was a common practice at the time for any song that was not known to be covered by copyright, and continues to the present day.

28. Brian Rust, *The Victor Master Book Volume 2 (1925-1936)* (Highland Park, New Jersey: Walter C. Allen, 1974), 224.

29. The Hopkins recording was issued on Brunswick 182 under the title "Boatin' Up Sandy"; the Weems recording was on Columbia 15300-D. Mississippians W.T. Narmour and S.W. Smith recorded a number called "Sweet Milk and Peaches" which is related to "Going Down the River." It appeared on Okeh 45424. For a modern recording (1973) see *Wild Rose of the Mountain: Eastern Kentucky Fiddle Music Played by J.P. and Anna-deene Fraley*, Rounder Records 0037.

30. The first version is as sung by J.P. Fraley on the record cited in footnote 29.

31. See Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs*, IV (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1980; reprint and revision of a work originally issued 1964-1950), 382-383. It is possible that Burnot and Redfern or Brown and Walsh are pseudonyms and thus there would be no conflict in credits.

32. Uncle Dave Macon's recording was issued on Vocalion 15100 and 5070.

33. Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs*. Edited and abridged by Norm Cohen (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 478-479.

34. For an extended discussion of black stereotypes in popular song see Sam Dennison, *Scandalize My Name: Black Imagery in American Popular Music* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982). Although it fails to credit previous researchers on the same topic this is still an important work.

35. Interview with Lackey, 4 June 1977.

"The Mormon Cowboy": An Arizona Cowboy Song and Its Community¹

Jim Griffith

On 13 October 1929, a Texas cowboy singer named Carl T. Sprague stepped up to the microphone in a Victor recording studio in Dallas and performed a song which he called "The Mormon Cowboy."² Sprague was no stranger to the recording process. Inspired by the success of Vernon Dalhart's 1924 recording, "The Prisoner's Song," he had appeared at the Victor offices in Camden, New Jersey in August 1925 with his guitar and a collection of Texas songs, including some fine cowboy ballads. This was his fourth (and, though he did not know it, his last) Victor session.³ Here are the tune and text of the song "The Mormon Cowboy" that he recorded that day, and which was issued as Victor V-40246. (I have divided the text into numbered couplets for easy reference, although the song is actually divided into seven verses of four lines each.)⁴

THE MORMON COWBOY

1st stanza (Couplets 1 & 2)

I — am a Mor-mon cow-boy, and U - tah is my home.

Tuc-son, Ar - i - zon - a is the first place I did roam.

From there in - to — El Cap - i - tan, — a place you all know well

To des - cribe that brush-y count-ry, no mor - tal tongue can tell.

3rd stanza (Couplets 5 & 6)

We all went to the dance that night at the school-house by the road.

Man - y folks — came from Drip-ping Springs, and man-y came from Globe.

The mus-ic they brought with them I nev-er shall for - get

'Twas a col - ored man — with his gui-tar, — I can hear him sing-ing — yet.

The Mormon Cowboy

1. I am a Mormon cowboy and Utah is my home,
Tucson, Arizona is the first place I did roam;
2. From there into El Capitan, a place you all know well,
To describe that brushy country, no mortal tongue can tell.
3. While at the old post office, a maid came riding down,
Upon a bronco pony, and was soon upon the ground;
4. She gave to each and every one an invitation grand,
Inviting us to a grand ball at the old El Capitan.
5. We all went to the dance that night at the schoolhouse
by the road,
Many folks came from Dripping Springs and many
came from Globe;
6. The music they brought with them I never shall forget,
'Twas a colored man with his guitar, I can hear him
singing yet.
7. There were lots of married women there, and single
girls too,
I soon became acquainted with all except a few;
8. The cowboys in their high heeled boots were leading
the grand march,
While the city dudes soon followed, in collars stiff with
starch.
9. After dancing two or three sets I stepped outside to
cool,
Every bush that I passed by was loaded with white
mule;
10. Then after serving supper, it was a quarter past one,
I heard a fight had started, each cowboy pulled his gun.
11. Up stepped a little cowpuncher, his eyes were flashing
fire,
He said he was the ramrod of the ranch called Bar F Bar;
12. I started for my pony, the guns were flashing fast,
I could hear the cowboys shouting, "We broke it up at
last."
13. So I bid farewell to my new-made friends and the place
called El Capitan,
The fairest face I ever saw was in the wild and happy
band;
14. I jumped into my saddle and started back toward
home,
Made up my mind right then and there that I never more
would roam.⁵

Nearly fifty years later, Sprague recalled that the song "was sent to me by a party whom I did not know but who had some of my early recordings and who had asked me to

record this 'Mormon Cowboy.' She sent me both the words and the music. I worked it over to suit my guitar playing and recorded it. It seemed to go over real well. I know nothing of the history of the song because the lady told me nothing about it. She just liked my recordings and wanted me to record 'The Mormon Cowboy' the way I had made all the other records."⁶

Although Sprague was pleased with its reception, the song seems not to have been picked up by other early commercial cowboy singers. Nineteen twenty-nine was late for genuine cowboy songs to take hold; singing western movies were just around the corner, bringing with them the western song and its highly romanticized view of cowboy life. Furthermore, the localized, low-key events of the song seem not to have had the appeal of, say, "The Sierry Petes" (or, "Tying Knots in the Devil's Tail," Laws B17).⁷ Composed by Arizonan Gail Gardner in 1917, and set to music in the late 1920s, "Tying Knots in the Devil's Tail" was disseminated by radio, record, and dude ranch performance at about the same time and gained considerable currency in tradition.⁸

The story line of "The Mormon Cowboy"—a young man having wild and exciting times while on a trip and then returning to the security of home—seems, according to my colleague Hal Cannon, to be a common one in the narratives of older Mormon men.⁹ This presents a strong contrast, not only with such widely distributed cowboy songs as "The Trail to Mexico" (Laws B13),¹⁰ but also with many songs in the western genre which was to become so popular in the 1930s and 1940s, which often remark on the narrator's eagerness to return to the adventure and freedom of the open range.¹¹ In some older cowboy songs all does not go well for the protagonist. He dies on the "Streets of Laredo" (Laws B1), learns that his sweetheart back home died with his name on her lips ("Cowboy Jack," Laws B24), or decides that cowpunching is nasty work ("The D-2 Horse Wrangler," Laws B27). These and similar songs appear to involve an individual being visited with the results of his own actions—a far different outcome, in my opinion, from a hasty return to the security of the fold after a fling at the wild life.

The song has been recovered in oral tradition, however. Two recordings in the Fife Collection at Utah State University were made of Al Bittick of Winkelman, Arizona, performing the song.¹² Neither of Bittick's texts contains any couplet that does not appear in Sprague's recording. Couplets 7 and 14 are omitted, and there are slight word changes throughout the song, but the general sense and sequence of activity remains the same. Winkelman is a mining and ranching town a few miles south of Dripping Springs, Arizona, and close enough to El Capitan that Bittick might have been a member of the community described in the song.¹³

Yet another version of the song is in the performance repertoire of folklorist Barre Toelken. Toelken first heard the song from ex-cowboy Buck Fisk on the Navajo Reservation about 1954. In Toelken's words, "...he didn't know all of it, so I didn't learn it or begin singing it until I heard Joannie O'Bryant of Wichita sing it. She had learned it from a guy in Colorado, when she spent summers there (around Durango)."¹⁴ The late Joan O'Bryant was an English professor who collected and sang folksongs; two albums with her singing are available on Folkways.¹⁵ Toelken went on to state that O'Bryant was aware that the song was also available on record, but felt that her version "had a clearer statement of story line or whatever." He describes her tune as similar to Fisk's. The text of the O'Bryant/Toelken version appears below.¹⁶ (For ease of reading, I have chosen to present this text in four line stanzas as it is sung, rather than in couplets.)

I am a Mormon Cowboy and Utah is my home.
From here to old Phoenix is the first place I did roam;
From there down to old El Capitan, a place you all know
well,
To describe this brushy country no human tongue can tell.

I was standin' by the post office when a maid come a-ridin'
down,
She stopped her pinto pony and soon was on the ground;
She gave to all us boys out there an invitation grand,
To attend a cowboy ball at the old El Capitan.

Well, Saturday night we all met there at the school-house
by the road,
Some came in from Drippin' Springs, some come in from
Globe;
Well, the music that they brought with them I never will
forget,
'Twas a colored man with his guitar, and I can hear him
singin' yet.

Now the cowboys in their high-heeled boots they led us in
the march,
The town dudes they all followed with their collars stiff
with starch;
After dancin' around it once or twice I went outside to
cool,
But every bush that I passed by was loaded with white
mule.

Before I could reach my pony the guns was flashin' past,
And the cowboys started yellin', 'It's breakin' up at last';
So I bid farewell to the whole affair and to the old El
Capitan,
But the prettiest girls that I ever met was in that wild and
woolly land.

The Sprague recording was reissued in 1965 on *Authentic Cowboys and Their Western Folksongs*.¹⁷ Since then, it has been "covered" by Sprague himself and by the Deseret String Band.¹⁸

Since the song describes incidents that apparently took place in Gila Country, Arizona, I attempted to learn more about it. The remainder of this essay presents the results of that effort.

The ruins of the El Capitan School House stand along Arizona State Highway 77, between the tiny settlement of Dripping Springs and Globe, the county seat. It was built by the residents of the El Capitan area, on land donated by a local rancher, probably before 1920. School had previously been held in a tent, until the local people donated money and labor to build the schoolhouse. It had one room, and was made of cement. In the early 1920s (the period described by our song) it held about twenty students, between first and tenth grades. The teacher lived in a tent nearby.

Approximately once a month, the community would get together for a Saturday night dance. The young people would raise money to pay the musicians by selling watermelons and box suppers, and a fine time was had by all. Local musicians would play, and the dances included squares, two-steps, and one steps. The evenings would always end with "Home Sweet Home." The dances were attended, not only by the families living in the area, but also by many of the cowboys who worked on nearby ranches. That part of Gila County was still rugged, open range, and roads were few. The Saturday night dances at the school house became important social events for the El Capitan area residents.¹⁹

The well-known Arizona writer and cowboy artist Ross Santee devoted a chapter of his book *Lost Pony Tracks* to the El Capitan dances, and to some of the shenanigans that he remembers happening there.²⁰ His is a cowboy's view of the proceedings. The dances were apparently well-chaperoned, and whatever homemade liquor there was remained well outside of the schoolhouse. However, some rather spectacular fights do figure in the memories of even the most respectable of my informants.²¹

Santee prints a version of the ballad, which differs in three places from that sung by Sprague.²² This is of some interest because it appears to be the source of the only other printed version I know, which is in a mimeographed songbook distributed in the early 1970s by one Coyote Wolfe, a local Globe character and author. Wolfe calls the song "The Mormon Cowboy, or El Capitan."²³

As a result of a letter to the editors of the *Globe Silver Belt*, I was sent ten texts of the ballad. Two are identical with the Santee/Wolfe version, and were probably copied directly from a printed text. Six others are similar to Sprague's text in that they have either the same or fewer couplets, with only the sort of variations one might expect from material in oral transmission. Among these variations are: "Some cars came from Dripping Springs" in couplet 5, "wild and woolly land" in couplet 13, and "a Colorado man with his guitar" in couplet 6. There are also

paraphrases such as:

She invited each and every one a grand ball to attend
to be held that Saturday night at the old Capitan school.

None of these variations suggests to me that it might not derive from the same basic source as Sprague's text.

Two texts, though similar in many respects to Sprague's, contain an additional couplet after Sprague's couplet 4. It reads:

And as she rode away, on her face a smile did gleam
And every time I thought of her, it seemed a happy dream.

This serves to introduce a new element—romantic attachment between the maid and the cowboy—into the song. This is elaborated upon in one of the two texts, which concludes with the following three "alternate stanzas":

I went back to Utah, which is my native state,
I never was contented, no longer could I wait;
I received a lot of letters, mailed at El Capitan,
I knew that they were written by my lover's hand.

I saddled up my pony and headed out her way,
I know she'll be waiting for that happy day;
Miles are getting shorter, I hope to be there soon,
In Safford we'll be married when the manzanitas bloom.

We'll give a dance and supper in the school house by the road,
Our friends will be invited from Dripping Springs and Globe;
The past will be forgotten, our troubles will be o'er,
We'll bring back ol' friendship and be happy evermore.²⁴

These variations, in addition to many not detailed, should be sufficient evidence that the song was in oral tradition in Gila County, and had a certain degree of independence from the recording. Another bit of evidence pointing in this direction is the attribution of authorship of the poem. Two correspondents believe that Sprague wrote the song; another attributed it to a local rancher named George Graham. Two more claim Hugh Wills as the author, while still another two opt for one Brigham Young. (Young did exist; he was a well-known local musician and band leader.) Yet another (who identifies herself with one of the characters in the song) mentions both Young and a Clarence Wills. Santee mentions being handed a manuscript of the poem by one "Bill Young," while Coyote Wolfe attributes the song to Santee and Shorty Carroway.²⁵ I take all this apparently conflicting information as good evidence that the song was "around" for a while.

One informant, a man in his mid-eighties, feels that the song under consideration, which he calls "El Capitan," is a 1920s rewrite by Hugh Wills of an earlier song, "The

Mormon Cowboy." This he says was popular around the turn of the century. The only couplet of this earlier song which he recalls is:

We all met at the old rock house, two men was shot that day,
But the lady who rode the buckskin horse was the one that got away.

This intriguing tidbit stands alone so far, and I have found nobody else who remembers the earlier song.²⁶

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the information I elicited concerning the song involves the glosses. Several people (including Santee in his book) identified both the black musician of couplet 6 and the feisty little cowboy of couplet 11. The former was a well-known local character named "Old Kentuck" or "Nigger Tuck." Stories concerning his behavior are still remembered and told. One Gila County text even mentions him by name:

The music they brought with them I never shall forget,
Ol' Kentuck with his guitar, I can still hear him singing yet.

The "little cowpuncher" was Lyn Mayes, well known both as a cowboy and as a fighter. One informant volunteered that a fiddler named Jack Vineyard often appeared at the dances, while others identified Brigham Young's band as being regular musicians. Another caller identified the maid who came riding down in couplet 3 as Blanche Brittain, who later married the Mormon Cowboy, a man named "Teet" Hill. This was later corroborated by Blanche Brittain Hill, who provided many of the details used in this essay. For her, the song is a reminder of her courtship and marriage.²⁷

Other glosses are of equal interest. One woman called long distance from Missouri to sing a partial text for me, and to tell me that the "brushy county" of couplet 2 was manzanita thickets. (Anyone who has ever tried to walk or ride through a manzanita thicket will understand the comment in the couplet; manzanita are thick growing, tough and tangled, and a thicket of them is almost impenetrable.) This same woman also told me that she had lived as a child with her grandmother in the El Capitan area during the 1920s. They had picked manzanita berries to make jelly. Those were wonderful times in her eyes. They would cut their own Christmas trees, which stood from floor to ceiling, and have wonderful Easter egg hunts. Mention of the song brought such memories back to her.²⁸

A man wrote: "I was raised in that country and my father, grandfather, and many friends had ranches there. In those days there were a lot of cowboys and a lot of wild cattle. I don't know which was the wildest...The event described was not as bad as it sounds. It was just a sort of cowboy harassment of a stranger for dancing with all the pretty girls and the fact that he was a Mormon didn't help

him any." This interpretation seems quite different from that given by Mrs. Hill.

Yet another correspondent put Sprague's record in perspective: "I came to Globe in April of 1918 and was a cowboy in Gila County for many years. The song which we called 'The Mormon Cowboy' came out in the 1920s and was patterned after an actual incident that happened at a dance at the school...There was a phonograph record cut of it, and all the 'houses of joy' in Globe played it constantly for a while."²⁹

I started my investigation with one isolated text, that of a commercial record cut in 1925. I now have several additional texts, and evidence that "The Mormon Cowboy" is in fact a folk song, using a fairly conservative definition of that term. That is, it is of uncertain authorship, and has existed over time in more than one version. It is certainly not widely known or performed in Arizona or the West today. The late Van Holyoak, who lived about sixty miles north of Globe, had a copy of Coyote Wolfe's text, but didn't like the song enough to add it to his extensive repertoire. My informants, however, had thought enough of it to write it down, to learn, and in some cases remember and sing the words, and to send me their texts and reminiscences.

The reason seems at least partly clear. It is a record of a series of incidents that were important to a specific community at a certain time. To those who had lived in the El Capitan area in the 1920s and were acquainted with those Saturday night dances and with the people who attended them, the song was important. To others it held little interest. For some members of that western community, however, it brought back memories—of wild cattle, men, and times; of courtship and marriage; of making manzanita jelly with Grandma. How one looked at the song depended to a great extent on who he or she was, but it is clear that the song was—and still is—the property of a community. A diverse community, to be sure—including cowboys and ranchers, town and country dwellers, Mormons and Gentiles—but a community nevertheless. "The Mormon Cowboy" in its variants and interpretations is in a real sense their song.

Sprague's recordings, the O'Bryant/Toelken text and the Deseret String Band recording provide our only real evidence that the song moved beyond the Gila County community that gave it birth. I have already shown that Sprague's recording was not "covered" by any other commercial artist prior to the Deseret String Band, an aggregation which includes among its members folklorist Hal Cannon. Only the O'Bryant/Toelken version (and, to a lesser extent, the related Bittick version) represents departure from the Sprague recording. Although the O'Bryant/Toelken melody is related to that used by Sprague, it has a certain point of variation. While Sprague's melody is basically AABA, with the "coarse"

and "fine" parts of the widespread Anglo-American two-part "fiddle tune" pattern, the O'Bryant/Toelken melody, which has an ABBA organization (typical of Irish ballads), seems to derive from a different tradition.

The O'Bryant/Toelken text also differs from the others in significant ways. In the first place, while the text contains no new action or couplets that are not in the Sprague version, couplets 7, 10, 11, and 14 have been deleted. The omission of couplet 11 removes Lyn Mayes—"the little cowpuncher"—from the song. His presence was not important to the development of the plot, but he was a part of the community present at the dances and as such is recognizable to many Gila County residents. The deletion of couplet 14 makes the song more readily acceptable to a Gentile community unfamiliar with (and indifferent to) the Mormon narrative pattern of returning to the safety of home after adventures in the outside world. With couplets 7, 10, and 14 omitted the narrator becomes less of an actor, more of an observer. Michael Korn has suggested that the narrator's involvement may be an important characteristic of western folk narrative, in contrast to the "detached observer" stance so prevalent in much south-eastern balladry.³⁰ Finally, by changing "fairest face" to "prettiest girls" in couplet 13, the O'Bryant/Toelken version substantially changes the nature of the narrator's reminiscences. All this becomes more interesting in light of the fact that O'Bryant deliberately learned this version because she preferred the story line to that in Sprague's recording.

It should be noted here that both versions sung by Al Bittick, currently in the Fife Collection, were collected by O'Bryant. Both Bittick texts omit couplets 7 and 14, and include couplets 10 and 11. Both also use the phrase "prettiest girls" in couplet 13. O'Bryant recorded Bittick twice, once in Arizona and once in Arkansas. I do not know whether he was her informant "in Colorado" mentioned by Toelken. If he was, either she or Toelken seem to have made additional changes in the text. The O'Bryant/Toelken tune seems to be quite close to Bittick's melody as transcribed for the Fife Archives.

There are other changes as well. While the Gila County texts do not, as a rule, express the present participle ending as "in" (as in "singing" or "Drippin' Springs"), the O'Bryant/Toelken text does. By the same token, the Gila County texts tend more towards standard English usage in verb pluralization than does the O'Bryant/Toelken one. In other words, there seems to be a deliberate attempt in the O'Bryant/Toelken text to use cowboy dialect of a sort that does not appear in the Gila County texts or in other performances. This may well be connected with the fact that O'Bryant and Toelken are "revivalist" singers—that is, they perform songs not directly within their tradition for an audience which may contain participants in a wide range of cultures. A typical audience for Toelken includes

people who may be totally unfamiliar, not only with the Gila County community of the 1920s, but with any aspect of cowboy song or life. For such audiences, non-standard grammatical usages may provide an important stamp of authenticity, signalling the presence of a "real" cowboy song.

This seems to indicate that, in the Bittick and O'Bryant/Toelken renditions of "The Mormon Cowboy," we have some evidence of the song beginning to move away from its local constituency toward a wider audience. A local character is omitted, and narrative, language, and style are changed to conform to interests other than those of the local community. Whether or not this process will continue is yet to be seen. Perhaps a new wave of interest in western song will carry "The Mormon Cowboy" further on his journey. But even if this does not happen, the song remains to remind us, not only of events that took place some sixty years ago in Central Arizona, but also of some of the still important differences between different communities in the United States.

Finally, it seems appropriate to attempt to place "The Mormon Cowboy" within a larger body of folksong. Is it, for example, a "Mormon Song"? I think not. The songs that I would be comfortable referring to by that label deal with some communal concern of the Mormon world: Mormon theology, for instance, like "None Can Preach the Gospel as the Mormons Do," or some event, large or small, of Mormon history, as in "The Handcart Song," or "Echo Canyon."³¹ These songs deal with issues and experiences specific to the social and religious concerns of the Mormon community: the virtues of Mormon religion and order; pushing handcarts across the plains; the experiences of communal labor. (This pattern is perceived by non-Mormons living in Mormon country; I have more than once heard statements to the effect that "every time those Mormons dig an irrigation ditch, they write a song about it.") Our ballad certainly does not fit into this pattern of communal concern.

Yet, as I mentioned above, its theme is a common one in Mormon male narratives: the enthusiastic detailing of an eventually resisted temptation. These narratives are heard, with a different emphasis, in church settings as well as in casual conversation.³² So while ours is not a "Mormon song" in the same sense as much of the material in the Hubbard and Cheney collections, it is apparently informed by an understanding of Mormon tradition and world view. However, it remains sufficiently ambiguous in its cultural approach that it has been sung and valued by Mormons and Gentiles alike.

It is certainly a song of the American West. This is apparent in several ways. In the first place, it comes out of a uniquely western community composed of Mormons, Gentiles, cowboys, miners, and ranchers. It uses a vocabulary specific to that community. The melody is relatively

sparse and unornamented, a quality which is shared by many older cowboy and western songs. As performed by Sprague, the song neatly fits the rhythm of a walking horse, an important consideration if one believes, as I do, that much of the older body of cowboy song was adapted to a horse's various gaits. Cowboys sang to each other, of course, but many cowboy singers of my acquaintance do most of their singing while working or traveling along. Nowadays this can be in a pickup truck; in the old days it was on horseback.³³

Whether the action be interpreted as a Mormon outsider being harassed for dancing with all the girls, or a young man regretfully returning to the security of the Mormon fold after a fling in the outside world, or, given the alternative ending of one informant, as a tale of courtship ending in marriage, the concerns of the song involve the maintenance of a community. In my opinion, this is not as surprising to find in a cowboy song as one might think.

In an essay on western music, Thomas Johnson states that the thematic focus of older western songs is upon "man's relation to nature, and away from society and women."³⁴ While final confirmation or denial of this hypothesis will have to await careful statistical analysis of a body of song that is commonly agreed upon as being "western" or "cowboy," I would like to comment briefly at this point.

The basic theme of cowboy songs strikes me as involving the individual, certainly, but often within the setting of the working community. Little Joe joins the trail drive, makes himself useful, and then dies while doing his part ("Little Joe the Wrangler," Laws B5). Charlie, who won't see his mother when the work's all done this fall, suffers a similar fate, and is mourned by his fellows after he distributes his worldly goods among them ("When the Work's All Done This Fall," Laws B3). Sam Bass and Jesse James went up not against nature but against organized society and met their fate ("Sam Bass," Laws E1; "Jesse James," Laws E4).

In each case, their betrayer is reviled in the song—certainly an application of social values necessary for the functioning of a community. The "educated feller" comes into camp and breaks social taboos by talking too much. "The boys" (read "local community") attempt to punish him by giving him the Zebra Dun, a notorious "outlaw," to ride. He redeems himself by proving himself a competent rider, and therefore a worthy member of the working community ("The Zebra Dun," Laws B16). To me, it is this combination of individual will, action, and responsibility with community concerns that gives much of the older cowboy music its special flavor. The individual is certainly important, and often must prove himself, but very frequently it is in a social context, rather than in a solitary struggle against nature.

"The Mormon Cowboy" exhibits some of this concern with society, no matter which interpretation one places upon the action. Our narrator, however, does not prove himself in the classic manner, but vows to hightail it for home, adhering to Mormon rather than Gentile values. This brings us again to the ambiguity of the song. It seems to reflect the specific community from which it comes, the El Capitan-Globe area, in which several sets of values and cultural traditions coexisted, albeit uneasily at times.

Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to this study. Dave Fisher and Norma Kelsey first suggested the idea and put me in touch with Norma's aunt, Blanche Hill. Mrs. Hill (widow of "Teet" Hill, "the Mormon Cowboy") granted me an interview. Carl T. Sprague wrote, telling me what he knew concerning the song. Cliff Edwards offered tantalizing recollections of a possible earlier version. Colleagues Barre Toelken and William A. Wilson sent me information, and Hal Cannon, Michael Korn, and Pack Carnes discussed problems of interpretations and presentation. John Fitch of the University of Arizona School of Music transcribed the melody of the Sprague version and made helpful comments on matters of style. Finally, the following present and former Gila County residents took the time to respond to a newspaper letter with valuable information: Paul Blumer, Don Haines, Jack Henderson, Curtis R. Jackson, Mrs. Nash Jones, Larry Kellner, Helen Lard, Robert F. McCusick, Phil Meadows, "Old Timer," Charlie Saunders, Mrs. Loretta Shepherd, and Mrs. Carl Vance. All of these people provided me with the information and ideas. I merely assembled their material and made my own mistakes.

Notes

1. A version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society in Nashville, Tennessee, October, 1983.

2. Harlan Daniel, Carl T. Sprague discography in Glenn Ohrlin, *The Hell-Bound Train: A Cowboy Songbook* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 278-80. The song under discussion should not be confused with a bawdy song by the same title, also known in Arizona. In this song a young woman marries an unfortunate fellow whose "hobo would not stand." After he is tried and convicted by a Court of Ladies, she marries a Mormon cowboy and is well satisfied. (Library of Congress AFS 15,593.)

3. John I. White, *Git Along, Little Dogies: Songs and Songmakers of the American West* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 189-95.

4. Recorded by Carl T. Sprague, 13 October 1929. Transcribed from the reissue LP, *Authentic Cowboys and Their Western Folksongs* (RCA Victor LPV-522). Tune transcribed by John Fitch, University of Arizona.

5. Although the basic action of the song is easy to understand, certain usages should perhaps be explained. A "bronco pony" is one that is only partly broken. That the maid would ride such a

horse is an indication that she is a good horsewoman, and probably of the local ranching community. "White mule" in this instance is bootleg whiskey. Stills were plentiful in Arizona as they were elsewhere during Prohibition, and illicit whiskey-making provides a popular topic of local cowboy reminiscences. The "ramrod" of an outfit is the foreman or person in charge; Bar F Bar is the brand of a local ranch, and would be written -F-.

6. Carl T. Sprague, personal correspondence, 20 June 1978. On file at the University of Arizona Folklore Archives (83-16/5).

7. This and subsequent citations of "Laws" refer to G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., *Native American Balladry: A Descriptive Study and Bibliographical Syllabus*, revised edition, (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1964). In Laws's system, ballads are classified thematically by narrative content and/or by the ethnic or occupational group in which the ballad is thought to have originated or had currency in tradition. The identifying letter and number indicate the class or category (letter) and the individual ballad type (number). For example, the "B" section is devoted to "Ballads of Cowboys and Pioneers." B17 refers to "Tying a Knot in the Devil's Tail."

8. White, 117-25. Harlan Daniel (in Ohrlin, 261) cites sixteen commercial recordings of "Tying Knots in the Devil's Tail" made between 1930 and the early 1970s.

9. Hal Cannon, "Fame Price, Mormon Cowboy." Unpublished paper read at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society, Nashville, Tennessee, October 1983.

10. Ohrlin, 148-151.

11. See for example, "One More Ride," *The Sons of the Pioneers* (JEMF 102).

12. The tapes were made on 2 August 1958, and 17 August 1958, respectively. It is interesting to note that there are slight but real differences between the two texts.

13. FAC I 88 and FAC II 112 in the Folklore Archives of Utah State University.

14. Barre Toelken, personal communication, 28 November 1983. On file at the University of Arizona Folklore Archive (83-26/18).

15. *Folksongs and Ballads of Kansas, Sung by Joan O'Bryant* (Folkways 2134) and *American Ballads and Folksongs* (Folkways 2338). The "Mormon Cowboy" does not appear on either album's list of titles.

16. Transcribed from a tape by Barre Toelken, November, 1983. The tape is now at the University of Arizona Folklore Archive (83-26/C-18).

17. RCA Victor LPV-522.

18. Carl T. Sprague, *Cowboy Songs From Texas* (Bear Family Records, BF 15006). Recorded August 1974 in Bryan, Texas. *Deseret String Band* (Okehdokee Records, cassette, no number, 1981). Also available on *The Deseret String Band* (Shanachie Records).

19. The information in this paragraph comes from a tape recorded interview with Blanche Hill, Tucson, Arizona, on file at the University of Arizona Folklore Archive (80-5/R-1).

20. Ross Santee, *Lost Pony Tracks* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 179-201.

21. Interview with Blanche Hill.

22. Santee, 200-201.

23. Coyote Wolfe, comp. *Words for 30 Old Songs*. Xerox copy of a thirty-four page mimeographed booklet. In the author's possession.

24. The preceding material is quoted from correspondence and notes on file at the University of Arizona Folklore Archives. This is the source for all Gila County information not otherwise identified (83-26/6 through 83-6/17; 82-27/C-1).

25. Wolfe songbook.

26. Cliff Edwards interview, 10 May 1984. Field notes.

27. Blanche Hill interview; other identifications come from correspondence on file at the University of Arizona Folklore Archive.

28. Notes to telephone conversation with Mrs. Loretta Shepherd, 8 May 1982. On file at the University of Arizona Folklore Archive (83-26/13).

29. The material in these two paragraphs comes from correspondence on file at the University of Arizona Folklore Archive (83-26/C-17; 82-27/C-1).

30. Michael Korn, conversation, January, 1984. Editor's note: The involvement of the narrator in the action is typical of the broadside ballad form, while the "detached observer" stance is common in the older British traditional ballads collected by F.J. Child.

31. Thomas E. Cheney, *Mormon Songs from the Rocky Mountains* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1981) #66, 142 ("None Can Preach the Gospel..."); #38, 94 ("Echo Canyon"). Lester A. Hubbard, *Ballads and Songs from Utah* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1961) #209, 399 ("Handcart Song"). Cheney also gives an excellent discussion of Mormon folksong in his "Introduction to Mormon Folksong," 3-22.

32. Hal Cannon, telephone conversation, June 1984.

33. In his novelette "Hit the Line Hard," Eugene Manlove Rhodes has one of his characters describe what is apparently "The Old Chisholm Trail," "as a saddle song. That goes to a trotting horse." In *The Best Novels and Stories of Eugene Manlove Rhodes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949), 371.

34. Thomas S. Johnson, "That Ain't Country: The Distinctiveness of Commercial Western Music," *JEMF Quarterly* 17:62 (Summer, 1981): 75-84.

The Ghost of Charles Nabell: Searching for the First Recorded Western Folk Singer

Thomas S. Johnson

Sometimes empirical research will not, even cannot, yield results. No matter how assiduously one applies oneself to the investigation, no matter how intensely one pursues new information, the data is too meager, the traces too faint to find, and a bigger microscope will reveal only a more meager, fainter ghost.

How often have fine people, who have made some fine thing, disappeared with no trace that can be picked up by scholars? This problem must be faced by anyone who would investigate the lore and music of the folk, and occurs when doing research in modern as well as historic folk music. Ultimately, one must trust one's intuition to fill in gaps, but even the best intuition may not produce results and the search must be abandoned. This can be illustrated by my attempt to track down information on the life of Charles Nabell, the first traditional western singer to make commercial phonograph records.

We know something of the life and recordings (for Columbia in 1919) of Bentley Ball, a semi-professional concert singer who traveled the Midwest, singing (among other things) a few western pieces he had learned from songbooks. Carl T. Sprague's life and work have been chronicled: he spent his youth on a Texas ranch; joined the Army; became a coach at Texas A&M University; and made cowboy song recordings for Victor beginning in 1927. But there is nothing of Charles Nabell, who was the first traditional performer of western folk songs to record. After four years of investigation, it seems, except for the evidence of his voice on records, as if Charles Nabell never lived.

In 1981, I set out to track down Nabell, with the hope that I could gain a better understanding of the beginnings of western music, and perhaps, if I was especially lucky or particularly thorough, an illuminating glimpse of the man himself. Initially, I searched for information on Nabell's recordings.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Harlan Daniel provided detailed data on the Nabell recordings. By correlating release numbers, master numbers, release dates, and concurrent artists, Harlan had established the approximate recording dates of Nabell's three sessions: 28 November 1924; the first week of April, 1925; and late October, 1925. St. Louis, Missouri, was the most likely location of the first two sessions as this was printed on the labels of four of Nabell's Okeh releases. The location of the third session is less certain, as I will explain later.

From Memphis, I went to the Country Music Foundation in Nashville to verify some of my discographic data, and from there to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. A search of materials in the sheet music and record catalog collections uncovered some Okeh catalogs, but these only confirmed the general time frame of releases—they contained no specific discographic or biographical data. Research in the copyright office yielded one additional piece of information. In 1927, two Nabell songs ("Letter from Home Sweet Home" and "Utah Carl") were registered by the Artophone corporation, 1622 Pine Street, St. Louis, Missouri. There was no address for Nabell himself. At this point, I turned west to St. Louis to begin the biographical search.

The St. Louis Public Library is organized well for genealogical research, though their old city and county directories have begun to disintegrate because no funds are available for their preservation. A day's search in the reference room turned up only one Charles Nabel (and no Charles Nabell) in St. Louis. His name appeared intermittently in the records from 1895 to 1906 and from 1918 to 1923. The genealogical files had no one named Nabel(1) indexed. Still, there was enough data to warrant further investigation.

The census records for 1900 list Charlie Nepel at the Nabel's Gratiot Street address—and a wife, Elizabeth, and a son, George. Born in 1859, Charlie had immigrated to the United States from Switzerland in 1881. Elizabeth came from Germany in 1882. In both the city directories and the census records, Charlie is listed as a day laborer.

An afternoon of driving around St. Louis led to the first serious disappointment encountered in my research. Charlie's first home (on Gratiot Street) is now a parking lot, and no other houses are standing for two blocks. There was no possibility of interviewing former neighbors or family. The site of the second house (also on Gratiot Street) is now a freeway off-ramp. What was once a German-Swiss ghetto is being industrialized out of existence.

There was no Artophone Corporation on Pine Street, or anywhere else in St. Louis. When a search of the city and county records offices revealed no death records for anyone in the Nabel family through 1935, I returned to the library.

A full day of research in the newspaper collections yielded no results. A review of both the *Globe-Democrat*

and *Post-Dispatch* for three weeks before and three weeks after the Okeh recording session dates revealed nothing. There were no advertisements concerning an Okeh field unit coming into town, no articles on local artists making records. In fact, there was only one advertisement selling Okeh records—and that was for a local big band.

Phone calls to local historical and folklore societies added nothing. In fact, everyone was surprised that a person of this potential importance had totally escaped their attention. Or perhaps they were being kind; historical societies often concern themselves with the history of the social elite, not that of “the folk.”

I returned to Texas and began a round of correspondence and phone calls. Professor A.E. Schroeder, of the University of Missouri, Columbia, went to a good deal of effort to track down data from informants knowledgeable in the history of the German and Swiss communities in St. Louis and Missouri. There was no information on Charlie.

In the summer of 1982, I made a trip to Dallas and Austin in search of more data. I was following up the intriguing possibility that Nabell’s third session might have taken place in Dallas. The master numbers of his last six records fall directly after a series of recordings done by Okeh in Dallas, and after his recordings there is a gap of four numbers, followed by recordings known to have been done in St. Louis. The arguments in favor of St. Louis are: it was the location of the two previous Nabell sessions; and two labels on records from the third session carry the note “Recorded in St. Louis.” I spent another day in library newspaper collections, and found an article in the *Dallas Times-Herald* of 22 October 1925 titled: “Phonograph Records Are Made by Texans.” In the article were the names of everyone else Harlan Daniel had listed as being present at that series of sessions: Jack Gardiner, the Bel Canto quartet, Edgar Norris, Irene Taylor, Jimmie’s Joys, the College Ramblers, the Cornfield Symphony Orchestra, Jimmie Wilson’s Catfish String Band, Doc and Mac, and Macbeth, a harmonica player—but no Charles Nabell.

A check of directories in the city of Dallas and Dallas county, as well as statewide death records in Austin, produced no Nabel(l)s from the 1920s through the 1940s. Texas was a dry hole, and this marked the end of active field research on Charles Nabell.

After listening carefully again to the Nabell recordings, I became convinced that Charlie Nepel (sic) of St. Louis, Missouri, could not have been the man who made them. Coming to the United States at age twenty-two, Nepel would likely have retained a distinctive Swiss-German accent throughout his life. The voice on the records is clearly American, with traces of the midwest and south in accent and intonation. The real Charles Nabell, whoever he may have been, must for now remain an enigma.

But this search for information on the life of Charles

Nabell has developed into more than a quest for the personal history of one man. It has led to a re-thinking of what constitutes western music and of its full cultural context.

Charles Nabell, evanescent as he has proven to be, appears as somewhat of a paradigm of the authentic westerner and his music. The quintessential westerner was, and is, the migrating male laborer, not the prettified movie cowboy. Likewise, the music of the frontier west was not the music solely of the cowboy, miner, logger or trapper, or of any one ethnic, occupational, cultural, or regional group. Instead, it was the music of the male migrant worker.

Although it is the cowboy songs that Nabell recorded that fix him in our minds—these constitute a majority of the first songs he recorded, and were the only ones he copyrighted—there are a variety of texts and tunes, from diverse geographic sources, in his full recorded repertoire. Research tells us that popular tunes from “back home” formed a large part of the repertoire of all westerners, and their appearance in Nabell’s repertoire suggest that he was either a migrant day laborer, or in close contact with such people.

In my travels I have encountered migrant workers, both Anglo and Hispanic. When they sing, the echoes of the old western songs are in their music. The topics of the songs have changed with the times but the *sound* of the voices has not. It is still the sound of people moving over the land, beyond the pale of society, away from and missing their original homes. The continuing presence of these people and their music, as transitory as they may be *individually*, is the final and most important discovery which came out of the search for Charles Nabell.

Acknowledgement

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A Preliminary Charles Nabell Discography

All releases on OKeh records.

Master #	Title	Release #
8759-A	The Preacher Made Us One	40262
8760-A	While the Leaves Came Drifting Down	40262
8761-A	The Letter from Home Sweet Home	40252
8762-A	The Great Round Up	40252
Unk. (a)	Utah Carl	7009 (b)
Unk. (a)	Follow the Golden Rule	7009 (b)

St. Louis, MO, 28 November 1924

Session Personnel: Charles Nabell, guitar and vocal

9007-A	Little Joe	40418 (c)
9008-A	There's a Mother Always Waiting You (sic) at Home Sweet Home	40418 (c)
9009-A	The Sheriff's Sale	40389
9010-A	Flower from My Angel Mother's Grave	40362 (c)
9011-A	Nobody's Business	40389
9012-A	Write a Letter to My Mother	40362 (c)

St. Louis, MO, ? March, 1925

Session Personnel: Charles Nabell, guitar and vocal

9391-A	Hills of Old Kentucky	45031 (c)
9392-A	Would You Care?	45031 (c)
9393-A	Memories of the South Before the War	45039 (c)
9394	After the War Is Over	45021 (b)
9395-A	Scopes Trial	45039 (c)
9396	When the Whole World Turns You Down	45021 (b)

Location Uncertain, ? October, 1925 (d)

Session Personnel: Charles Nabell, guitar and vocal

-
- (a) No copy of this record seen or reported. Placement at this session based solely on "Utah Carl" being registered for copyright at the same time as "The Letter from Home Sweet Home."
 - (b) All records except these on file at the Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center.
 - (c) Labels carry the note "Recorded in St. Louis."
 - (d) See text of article for further discussion of possible date and location of this session.



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